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SIR WALTER SCOTT

AS A CRITIC OF LITERATURE

SIR WALTER SCOTT

AS A CRITIC OF LITERATURE

BY

MARGARET BALL

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SIR WALTER SCOTT AS A CRITIC OF LITERATURE

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PREFACE

The lack of any adequate discussion of Scott's critical work is a sufficient reason for the undertaking of this study, the subject of which was suggested to me more than three years ago by Professor Trent of Columbia University. We still use critical essays and monumental editions prepared by the author of the Waverley novels, but the criticism has been so overshadowed by the romances that its importance is scarcely recognized. It is valuable in itself, as well as in the opportunity it offers of considering the relation of the critical to the creative mood, an especially interesting problem when it is presented concretely in the work of a great writer.

No complete bibliography of Scott's writings has been published, and perhaps none is possible in the case of an author who wrote so much anonymously. The present attempt includes some at least of the books and articles commonly left unnoticed, which are chiefly of a critical or scholarly character.

I am glad to record my gratitude to Professor William Allan Neilson, now of Harvard University, and to Professors A. H. Thorndike, W. W. Lawrence, G. P. Krapp, and J. E. Spingarn, of Columbia, for suggestions in connection with various parts of the work. From the beginning Professor Trent has helped me constantly by his advice as well as by the inspiration of his scholarship, and my debt to him is one which can be understood only by the many students who have known his kindness.

Mount Holyoke College,
June, 1907.

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A DATED LIST OF SCOTT'S BOOKS, ASIDE FROM THE POEMS AND NOVELS, AND OF THE PRINCIPAL WORKS WHICH HE EDITED (PERIODICAL CRITICISM NOT INCLUDED).

1802–3 Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (edited).
1804 Sir Tristrem (edited).
1806 Original Memoirs written during the Great Civil War; the Life of Sir H. Slingsby, and Memoirs of Capt. Hodgson (edited).
1808 Memoirs of Capt. Carleton (edited).
1808 The Works of John Dryden (edited).
1808 Memoirs of Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth, and Fragmenta Regalia (edited).
1808 Queenhoo Hall, a Romance; and Ancient Times, a Drama (edited).
1809 The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler (edited).
1809–15 The Somers Tracts (edited).
1811 Memoirs of the Court of Charles II, by Count Grammont (edited).
1811 Secret History of the Court of James the First (edited).
1813 Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I, by Sir Philip Warwick (edited).
1814 The Works of Jonathan Swift (edited).
1814–17 The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland.
1816 Paul's Letters.
1818 Essay on Chivalry.
1819 Essay on the Drama.
1819–26 Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland.
1820 Trivial Poems and Triolets by Patrick Carey (edited).
1821 Northern Memoirs, calculated for the Meridian of Scotland; and the Contemplative and Practical Angler (edited).

1821–24 The Novelists' Library (edited).
1822 Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs from 1680 till 1701 (edited).
1822 Military Memoirs of the Great Civil War (edited).
1824 Essay on Romance.
1826 Letters of Malachi Malagrowther on the Currency.
1827 The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte.
1828 Tales of a Grandfather, first series.
1828 Religious Discourses, by a Layman.
1828 Proceedings in the Court-martial held upon John, Master of Sinclair, etc. (edited).
1829 Memorials of George Bannatyne (edited).
1829 Tales of a Grandfather, second series.
1829–32 The "Opus Magnum" (Novels, Tales, and Romances, with Introductions and Notes by the Author).
1830 Tales of a Grandfather, third series.
1830 Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.
1830 History of Scotland.
1831 Tales of a Grandfather, fourth series.
1831 Trial of Duncan Terig, etc. (edited).

1890 The Journal of Sir Walter Scott.
1894 Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

AS A CRITIC OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Importance of a study of Scott's critical and scholarly work — Connection between his creative work and his criticism — Chronological view of his literary career.

Scott's critical work has become inconspicuous because of his predominant fame as an imaginative writer; but what it loses on this account it perhaps gains in the special interest attaching to criticism formulated by a great creative artist. One phase of his work is emphasized and explained by the other, and we cannot afford to ignore his criticism if we attempt fairly to comprehend his genius as a poet and novelist. The fact that he is the subject of one of the noblest biographies in our language only increases our obligation to become acquainted with his own presentation of his artistic principles.

But though criticism by so great and voluminous a writer is valuable mainly because of the important relation it bears to his other work, and because of the authority it derives from this relation, Scott's scholarly and critical writings are individual enough in quality and large enough in extent to demand consideration on their own merits. Yet this part of his achievement has received very little attention from biographers and critics. Lockhart's book is indeed full of materials, and contains also some suggestive comment on the facts presented; but as the passing of time has made an estimation of Scott's power more safe, students have lost interest in his work as a critic, and recent writers have devoted little attention to this aspect of the great man of letters.[1]

[1] Mr. Hutton's *Life of Scott*, in the English Men of Letters series, contains no chapter nor any extended passage on Scott's critical and scholarly work, though there is a chapter on "Scott's Morality and Religion," and one on "Scott as a Politician." This, like the other short biographies of Scott, is professedly a compilation, so far as its facts are concerned, from Lockhart's book. The Lives of Scott by Gilfillan and by Mackenzie, published about the time of the Scott centenary in 1871, are longer than Hut-

The present study is an attempt to show the scope and quality of Scott's critical writings, and of such works, not exclusively or mainly critical, as exhibit the range of his scholarship. For it is impossible to treat his criticism without discussing his scholarship; since, lightly as he carried it, this was of consequence in itself and in its influence on all that he did. The materials for analysis are abundant; and by rearrangement and special study they may be made to contribute both to the history of criticism and to our comprehension of the power of a great writer. In considering him from this point of view we are bound to remember the connection between the different parts of his vocation. In him, more than in most men of letters, the critic resembled the creative writer, and though the critical temperament seems to show itself but rarely in his romances, we find that the characteristic absence of precise and conscious art is itself in harmony with his critical creed.

The relation between the different parts of Scott's literary work is exemplified by the subjects he treated, for as a critic he touched many portions of the field, which in his capacity of poet and novelist he occupied in a different way. He was a historical critic no less than a historical romancer. A larger proportion of his criticism concerns itself with the eighteenth century, perhaps, than of his fiction,[1] and he often wrote re-

ton's, but contain no more extended reference to the critical writings. Mackenzie's book out of nearly five hundred pages gives only one to a discussion of the edition of Dryden, and half a page to an account of the establishment of the *Quarterly Review*. Gilfillan characterizes the critical work in almost as short a space, but with a good deal of judgment. The German biography of Scott contemporary with these, by Dr. Felix Eberty, is concerned with the man rather than his works. Of later Lives of Scott, Prof. Saintsbury's gives, in proportion to its length, more space than any other to Scott's critical work, but the book has only a hundred and fifty-five pages in all. Another recent biographer, Mr. W. H. Hudson, says of Scott's editorial and critical work, "these exertions, though they call for passing record, occupy a minor place in his story"; and he gives them only "passing record." Mr. Andrew Lang's still more recent and briefer *Sir Walter Scott* devotes only a few lines here and there to comment on Scott as a critic, and contains hardly even a reference to the little-known volumes that he edited.

[1] Ten of Scott's twenty-seven novels (counting the first series of *Chronicles of the Canongate* as one) have scenes laid in the eighteenth century. They are as follows, arranged approximately in the order of their periods:

views of contemporary literature, but on the whole the literature with which he dealt critically was representative of those periods of time which he chose to portray in novel and poem. This evidently implies great breadth of scope. Yet Scott's vivid sense of the past had its bounds, as Professor Masson pointed out.[1] It was the "Gothic" past that he venerated. The field of his studies, chronologically considered, included the period between his own time and the crusades; and geographically, was in general confined to England and Scotland, with comparatively rare excursions abroad. When, in his novels, he carried his Scottish or English heroes out of Britain into foreign countries, he was apt to bestow upon them not only a special endowment of British feeling, but also a portion of that interest in their native literature which marked the taste of their creator. We find that the personages in his books are often distinguished by that love of stirring poetry, particularly of popular and national poetry, which was a dominant trait in Scott's whole literary career.

With Scotland and with popular poetry any discussion of Sir Walter properly begins. The love of Scottish minstrelsy first awakened his literary sense, and the stimulus supplied by ballads and romances never lost its force. We may say that the little volumes of ballad chap-books which he collected and bound up before he was a dozen years old suggested the future editor, as the long poem on the Conquest of Grenada, which he is said to have written and burned when he was fifteen, foreshadowed the poet and romancer.

Yet Scott's career as an author began rather late. He published a few translations when he was twenty-five years old, but his first notable work, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, did not appear until 1802–3, when he was over thirty. This book, the outgrowth of his early interest in ballads and his own attempts at versifying, exhibited both his editorial and his creative powers. It led up to the publication of two important

The Bride of Lammermoor, The Pirate, The Black Dwarf, Rob Roy, The Heart of Midlothian, Waverley, Guy Mannering, Redgauntlet, Chronicles of the Canongate (First series), The Antiquary. The long poems all found their setting in earlier periods.

[1] *British Novelists and their Styles*, pp. 167–8.

volumes which contained material originally intended to form part of the *Minstrelsy,* but which outgrew that work. These were the edition of the old metrical romance *Sir Tristrem,* which showed Scott as a scholar, and the *Lay of the Last Minstrel,* the first of Scott's own metrical romances. So far his literary achievement was all of one kind, or of two or three kinds closely related. In this first period of his literary life, perhaps even more than later, his editorial impulse, his scholarly activity, was closely connected with the inspiration for original writing. The *Lay of the Last Minstrel* was the climax of this series of enterprises.

With the publication of the *Minstrelsy,* Scott of course became known as a literary antiquary. He was naturally called upon for help when the *Edinburgh Review* was started a few weeks afterwards, especially as Jeffrey, who soon became the editor, had long been his friend. The articles that he wrote during 1803 and 1804 were of a sort that most evidently connected itself with the work he had been doing: reviews, for example, of Southey's *Amadis de Gaul,* and of Ellis's *Early English Poetry.* During 1805–6 the range of his reviewing became wider and he included some modern books, especially two or three which offered opportunity for good fun-making. About 1806, however, his aversion to the political principles which dominated the *Edinburgh Review* became so strong that he refused to continue as a contributor, and only once, years later, did he again write an article for that periodical.

In the same year, 1806, Scott supplied with editorial apparatus and issued anonymously *Original Memoirs Written during the Great Civil War,* the first of what proved to be a long list of publications having historical interest, sometimes reprints, sometimes original editions from old manuscripts, to which he contributed a greater or less amount of material in the shape of introductions and notes. These were undertaken in a few cases for money, in others simply because they struck him as interesting and useful labors. It is easy to trace the relation of this to his other work, particularly to the novels. He once wrote to a friend, "The editing a new edition of *Somers's Tracts* some years ago made me wonderfully well

acquainted with the little traits which marked parties and characters in the seventeenth century, and the embodying them is really an amusing task."[1] Among the works which he edited in this way the number of historical memoirs is noticeable. After the volume that has been mentioned as the first, he prepared another book of *Memoirs of the Great Civil War;* and we find in the list a *Secret History of the Court of James I., Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I.,* Count Grammont's *Memoirs of the Court of Charles II., A History of Queen Elizabeth's Favourites,* etc. Such books as these, besides furnishing material for his novels, led Scott to acquire a mass of information that enabled him to perform with great facility and with admirable results whatever editorial work he might choose to undertake.

These labors Scott always considered as trifles to be dispatched in the odd moments of his time, but the great edition of *Dryden's Complete Works,* which he began to prepare soon after the *Minstrelsy* appeared, was more important. This, next to the *Minstrelsy,* was probably the most notable of all Scott's editorial enterprises. It was published in eighteen volumes in 1808, the year in which *Marmion* also appeared. When the poet was reproached by one of his friends for not working more steadily at his vocation, he replied, " The public, with many other properties of spoiled children, has all their eagerness after novelty, and were I to dedicate my time entirely to poetry they would soon tire of me. I must therefore, I fear, continue to edit a little."[2] His interest in scholarly pursuits appears even in his first attempt at writing prose fiction, since Joseph Strutt's unfinished romance, *Queenhoo Hall,* for which Scott wrote a conclusion, is of consequence only on account of the antiquarian learning which it exhibits.

Having become seriously alarmed over the political influence of the *Edinburgh Review,* Scott was active in forwarding plans for starting a strong rival periodical in London, and 1809 saw the establishment of the *Quarterly Review.* By that time he had done a considerable amount of work in practically every

[1] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 9.
[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 194.

kind except the novel, and he was recognized as a most efficient assistant and adviser in any such enterprise as the promoters of the *Quarterly* were undertaking. Moreover, his own writings were prominent among the books which supplied material for the reviewer. He worked hard for the first volume. But after that year he wrote little for the *Quarterly* until 1818, and again little until after Lockhart became editor in 1825. From that time until 1831 he was an occasional contributor.

1814 was the year of *Waverley*. Before that the poems had been appearing in rapid succession, and Scott had been busy with the *Works of Swift*, which came out also in 1814. The thirteen volumes of the edition of *Somers' Tracts*, already mentioned, and several smaller books, bore further witness to his editorial energy. The last of the long poems was published in 1815, about the same time with *Guy Mannering*, the second novel, and after that the novels continued to appear with that rapidity which constitutes one of the chief facts of Scott's literary career. For a few years after this period he did comparatively little in the way of editorial work, but his odd moments were occupied in writing about history, travels, and antiquities.[1]

In 1820 Scott wrote the *Lives of the Novelists*, which appeared the next year in Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library*. By this time he had begun, with *Ivanhoe*, to strike out from the Scottish field in which all his first novels had been placed. The martial pomp prominent in this novel reflects the eager interest with which he was at that time following his son's opening career in the army; just as *Marmion*, written by the young quartermaster of the Edinburgh Light Horse, also expresses the military ardor which was so natural to Scott, and which reminds us of his remark that in those days a regiment of dragoons was tramping through his head day and night. Probably we might trace many a reason for his literary preoccupations at special times besides those that he has himself commented upon. In the case of the critical work, however,

[1] See particularly *Paul's Letters; Provincial Antiquities;* and the Histories of the years 1814 and 1815, each a respectable volume, written for the *Edinburgh Annual Register*.

the matter was usually determined for him by circumstances of a much less intimate sort, such as the appeal of an editor or the appearance of a book which excited his special interest.

When Scott was obliged to make as much money as possible he wrote novels and histories rather than criticism. His *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte,* which appeared in nine volumes in 1827, enabled him to make the first large payment on the debts that had fallen upon him in the financial crash of the preceding year, and the *Tales of a Grandfather* were among the most successful of his later books. His critical biographies and many of his other essays were brought together for the first time in 1827, and issued under the title of *Miscellaneous Prose Works.* The world of books was making his life weary with its importunate demands in those years when he was writing to pay his debts, and it is pleasant to see that some of his later reviews discussed matters that were not less dear to his heart because they were not literary. The articles on fishing, on ornamental gardening, on planting waste lands, remind us of the observation he once made, that his oaks would outlast his laurels.

By this time the "Author of Waverley" was no longer the "unknown." His business complications compelled him to give his name to the novels, and with the loss of a certain kind of privacy he gained the freedom of which later he made such fortunate use in annotating his own works. From the beginning of 1828 until the end of his life in 1832, Scott was engaged, in the intervals of other occupations, in writing these introductions and notes for his novels, for an edition which he always called the *Opus Magnum.* This was a pleasant task, charmingly done. Indeed we may call it the last of those great editorial labors by which Scott's fame might live unsupported by anything else. First came the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* then the editions of Dryden and Swift. Next we may count the *Lives of the Novelists,* even in the fragmentary state in which the failure of the *Novelists' Library* left them; and finally the *Opus Magnum.* When, in addition, we remember the mass of his critical work written for periodicals, and the number of minor volumes he edited, it becomes

evident that a study of Scott which disregards this part of his work can present only a one-sided view of his achievement. And the qualities of his abundant criticism, especially its large fresh sanity, seem to make it worthy of closer analysis than it usually receives, not only because it helps to reveal Scott's genius, but also on account of the historical and ethical importance which always attaches to the ideals, literary and other, of a noble man and a great writer.

CHAPTER II

Scott's Qualifications as Critic

Wide reading Scott's first qualification — Scott the antiquary — Character of his interest in history — His imagination — His knowledge of practical affairs — Common-sense in criticism — Cheerfulness, good-humor, and optimism — General aspect of Scott's critical work.

Wide and appreciative reading was Scott's first qualification for critical work. A memory that retained an incredible amount of what he read was the second. One of the severest censures he ever expressed was in regard to Godwin, who, he thought, undertook to do scholarly work without adequate equipment. "We would advise him," Scott said in his review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer,* "in future to read before he writes, and not merely while he is writing." Scott himself had accumulated a store of literary materials, and he used them according to the dictates of a temperament which had vivid interests on many sides.

We may distinguish three points of view which were habitual to Scott, and which determined the direction of his creative work, as well as the tone of his criticism. These were—as all the world knows—the historical, the romantic, the practical.

He was, as he often chose to call himself, an antiquary; he felt the appeal of all that was old and curious. But he was much more than that. The typical antiquary has his mind so thoroughly devoted to the past that the present seems remote to him. The sheer intellectual capacity of such a man as Scott might be enough to save him from such a limitation, for he could give to the past as much attention as an ordinary man could muster, and still have interest for contemporary affairs; but his capacity was not all that saved Scott. He viewed the past always as filled with living men, whose chief occupation was to think and feel rather than to provide towers and armor

for the delectation of future antiquaries.[1] A sympathetic student of his work has said, "There is . . . throughout the poetry of this author, even when he leads us to the remotest wildernesses and the most desolate monuments of antiquity, a constant reference to the feelings of man in his social condition."[2] The past, to the author of *Kenilworth,* was only the far end of the present, and he believed that the most useful result of the study of history is a comprehension of the real quality of one's own period and a wisdom in the conduct of present day affairs.[3]

The favorite pursuits of Scott's youth indicate that his characteristic taste showed itself early; indeed it is said that he retained his boyish traits more completely than most people do. We can trace much of his love of the past to the family traditions which made the adventurous life of his ancestors vividly real to him. The annals of the Scotts were his earliest study, and he developed such an affection for his freebooting grandsires that in his manhood he confessed to an unconquerable liking for the robbers and captains of banditti of his romances, characters who could not be prevented from usurping the place of the heroes. "I was always a willing listener to tales of broil and battle and hubbub of every kind," he wrote in later life, "and now I look back upon it, I think what a godsend I must have been while a boy to the old Trojans of 1745, nay 1715, who used to frequent my father's house, and who knew as little as I did for what market I was laying up the raw materials of their oft-told tales."[4] What attracted him in his boyhood, and what continued to attract him, was the picturesque incident, the color of the past, the mere look

[1] Ruskin's remark that "The excellence of Scott's work is precisely in proportion to the degree in which it is sketched from present nature," should not necessarily lead on to the condemnation which follows: "He does not see how anything is to be got out of the past but confusion, old iron on drawing-room chairs, and serious inconvenience to Dr. Heavysterne." (*Modern Painters,* Part IV, ch. 16, § 32.)

[2] *Letters to Richard Heber,* etc. (by J. L. Adolphus), pp. 136–137.

[3] Mr. Herford distinguishes two lines of romantic sentiment—"the one pursuing the image of the past as a refuge from reality, the other as a portion of it: the mediævalism of Tieck and the mediævalism of Scott." *The Age of Wordsworth,* Introduction, p. xxiv, note.

[4] *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart,* p. 249.

of its varied activity. The philosophy of history was gradually revealed to him, however, and his generalizing faculty found congenial employment in tracing out the relation of men to movements, of national impulses to world history. But however much he might exercise his analytical powers, history was never abstract to him, nor did it require an effort for him to conjure up scenes of the past. An acquaintance with the stores of early literature served to give him the spirit of remote times as well as to feed his literary tastes. On this side he had an ample equipment for critical work, conditioned, of course, by the other qualities of his mind, which determined how the equipment should be used.

That Scott was not a dull digger in heaps of ancient lore was owing to his imaginative power,—the second of the qualities which we have distinguished as dominating his literary temperament. "I can see as many castles in the clouds as any man," he testified.[1] A recent writer has said that Scott had more than any other man that ever lived a sense of the romantic, and adds that his was that true romance which "lies not upon the outside of life, but absolutely in the centre of it."[2] The situations and the very objects that he described have the power of stirring the romantic spirit in his readers because he was alive to the glamour surrounding anything which has for generations been connected with human thoughts and emotions. The subjectivity which was so prominent an element in the romanticism of Shelley, Keats, and Byron, does not appear in Scott's work. Nor was his sense of the mystery of things so subtle as that of Coleridge. But Scott, rather than Coleridge, was the interpreter to his age of the romantic spirit, for the ordinary person likes his wonders so tangible that he may know definitely the point at which they impinge upon his consciousness. In Scott's work the point of contact is made clear: the author brings his atmosphere not from another world but from the past, and with all its strangeness it has no unearthly quality.

[1] *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 333; *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 81. The edition of Lockhart's *Life of Scott* to which reference is made throughout this study is that in five volumes, published by Macmillan & Co. in the "Library of English Classics."

[2] Chesterton, *Varied Types*, pp. 161–2.

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In general the romance of his nature is rather taken for granted than insisted on, for there are the poems and the novels to bear witness to that side of his temperament; and the surprising thing is that such an author was a business man, a large landowner, an industrious lawyer.[1]

Scott's imaginative sense, which clothed in fine fancies any incident or scene presented, however nakedly, to his view, accounts in part for his notorious tendency to overrate the work of other writers, especially those who wrote stories in any form. This explanation was hinted at by Sir Walter himself, and formulated by Lockhart; it seems a fairly reasonable way of accounting for a trait that at first appears to indicate only a foolish excess of good-nature. This rich and active imagination, which Scott brought to bear on everything he read, perhaps explains also his habit of paying little attention to carefully worked out details, and of laying almost exclusive emphasis upon main outlines. When he was writing his *Life of Napoleon,* he said in his *Journal:* "Better a superficial book which brings well and strikingly together the known and acknowledged facts, than a dull boring narrative, pausing to see further into a mill-stone at every moment than the nature of the mill-stone admits."[2] Probably his high gift of imagination made him a little impatient with the remoter reaches of the analytic faculties. Any sustained exercise of the pure reason was outside his province, reasonable as he was in everyday affairs. He preferred to consider facts, and to theorize only so far as was necessary to establish comfortable relations between the facts,—never to the extent of trying to look into

[1] The fact that Scott was a Clerk of the Court of Sessions is remembered less frequently than the fact that he had business complications. But this employment of his, which could be undertaken only by a lawyer, occupied a large proportion of his time during twenty-four years. He once wrote, "I cannot work well after I have had four or five hours of the court, for though the business is trifling, yet it requires constant attention, which is at length exhausting." (*Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, p. 195.) Again he wrote, "I saw it reported that Joseph Hume said I composed novels at the clerk's table; but Joseph Hume said what neither was nor could be correct, as any one who either knew what belonged to composing novels, or acting as clerk to a court of justice, would easily have discovered." (*Memoirs of Sir William Knighton,* p. 252.)

[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 60; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 390.

the center of a mill-stone. It was not unusual for him to make very acute observations in the spheres of ethics, economics, and psychology, and to use them in explaining any situation which might seem to require their assistance; but these remarks were brief and incidental, and bore a very definite relation to the concrete ideas they were meant to illustrate.

Scott was a business man as well as an antiquary and a poet. Mr. Palgrave thought Lockhart went too far in creating the impression that Scott could detach his mind from the world of imagination and apply its full force to practical affairs.[1] Yet the oversight of lands and accounts and of all ordinary matters was so congenial to him, and his practical activities were on the whole conducted with so much spirit and capability, that after emphasizing his preoccupation with the poetic aspects of the life of his ancestors, we must turn immediately about and lay stress upon his keen judgment in everyday affairs. To a school-boy poet he once wrote: "I would . . . caution you against an enthusiasm which, while it argues an excellent disposition and a feeling heart, requires to be watched and restrained, though not repressed. It is apt, if too much indulged, to engender a fastidious contempt for the ordinary business of the world, and gradually to render us unfit for the exercise of the useful and domestic virtues which depend greatly upon our not exalting our feelings above the temper of well-ordered and well-educated society."[2] He phrased the same matter differently when he said: "'I'd rather be a kitten and cry, Mew!' than write the best poetry in the world on condition of laying aside common-sense in the ordinary transactions and business of the world."[3] "He thought," said Lockhart, "that to spend some fair portion of every day in any matter-of-fact occupation is good for the higher faculties themselves in the upshot."[4] Whether or not we consider this the ideal theory of life for a poet, we find it reasonable to suppose that a critic will be the better critic if he preserve some balance between matter-of-fact occupation and the exercise of his

[1] See the Memoir prefixed to the Globe Edition of Scott's poems.
[2] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 217.
[3] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 447.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 122.

higher faculties. Sir Walter's maxim applies well to himself at least, and an analysis of his powers as a critic derives some light from it.

The thing that is waiting to be said is of course that his criticism is distinguished by common-sense. Whether common-sense should really predominate in criticism might perhaps be debated; the quality indicates, indeed, not only the excellence but also the limitations of his method. For example, Scott was rather too much given to accepting popular favor as the test of merit in literary work, and though the clamorously eager reception of his own books was never able to raise his self-esteem to a very high pitch, it seems to have been the only thing that induced him to respect his powers in anything like an appreciative way.[1] His instinct and his judgment agreed in urging him to avoid being a man of "mere theory,"[2] and he sought always to test opinions by practical standards.

More or less connected with his good sense are other qualities which also had their effect upon his critical work,—his cheerfulness, his sweet temper and human sympathy, his modesty, his humor, his independence of spirit, and his enthusiastic delight in literature. That his cheerfulness was a matter of temperament we cannot doubt, but it was also founded on principle. He had remarkable power of self-control.[3] His opinion that it is a man's duty to live a happy life appears rather quaintly in the sermonizing with which he felt called upon to temper the admiration expressed in his articles on *Childe Harold,* and it is implicit in many of his biographical studies. His own amiability of course influenced all his work. Satire he considered objectionable, "a woman's fault,"[4] as he once called it; though he did not feel himself "altogether disquali-

[1] Cooper measured his own success by the same test. At the conclusion of the Letter to the Publisher with which *The Pioneers* originally opened he said he should look to his publisher for "the only true account of the reception of his book." (Lounsbury's *Life of Cooper,* pp. 43–4.)

[2] *Napoleon,* Vol. I, ch. 2.

[3] "He fixed his attention on his employments without the slightest consideration for his own feelings of whatever kind, either in regard to state of health or domestic sorrows." (*Memoirs of a Literary Veteran,* by R. P. Gillies, Vol. III, p. 141.)

[4] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 365.

fied for it by nature."[1] "I have refrained, as much as human frailty will permit, from all satirical composition,"[2] he said. For satire he seems to have substituted that kind of "serious banter, a style hovering between affected gravity and satirical slyness," which has been pointed out as characteristic of him.[3] Washington Irving noticed a similar tone in all his familiar conversations about local traditions and superstitions.[4]

He was really optimistic, except on some political questions. In his *Lives of the Novelists* he shows that he thought manners and morals had improved in the previous hundred years; and none of his reviews exhibits the feeling so common among men of letters in all ages, that their own times are intellectually degenerate. It is true that he looked back to the days of Blair, Hume, Adam Smith, Robertson, and Ferguson, as the "golden days of Edinburgh,"[5] but those golden days were no farther away than his own boyhood, and he had felt the exhilaration of the stimulating society which he praised. One of his contemporaries spoke of Scott's own works as throwing "a literary splendour over his native city";[6] and George Ticknor said of him, "He is indeed the lord of the ascendant now in Edinburgh, and well deserves to be, for I look upon him to be quite as remarkable in intercourse and conversation, as he is in any of his writings, even in his novels."[7] But he could hardly be expected to perceive the luster surrounding his own personality, and this one instance of regret for former days counts little against the abundant evidence that he thought the world was improving. Yet of all his contemporaries he was probably the one who looked back at the past with the greatest interest. The impression made by the author of *Waverley* upon the mind of a young enthusiast of his own time is too delightful to pass over without quotation. "He has no eccentric sympathies or antipathies"; wrote J. L. Adolphus, "no maudlin philanthropy or impertinent cynicism; no nondescript hobby-horse; and with

[1] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 112.
[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 303; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 68.
[3] *Letters to Heber,* p. 69. [4] Irving's *Abbotsford.*
[5] *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor,* Vol. I, p. 282. See also Scott's review of the *Life of Home;* and *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 304.
[6] *Cockburn's Memorials,* p. 181. [7] *Ticknor,* Vol. I, p. 280.

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all his matchless energy and originality of mind, he is content to admire popular books, and enjoy popular pleasures; to cherish those opinions which experience has sanctioned; to reverence those institutions which antiquity has hallowed; and to enjoy, admire, cherish, and reverence all these with the same plainness, simplicity, and sincerity as our ancestors did of old."[1]

By temperament, then, Scott was enthusiastic over the past and cheerful in regard to his own day; he was imaginative, practical, genial; and these traits must be taken into account in judging his critical writings. These and other qualities may be deduced from the most superficial study of his creative work. The mere bulk of that work bears witness to two things: first that Scott was primarily a creative writer; again, that he was of those who write much rather than minutely. It is obvious that to attack details would be easy. And since he was only secondarily a critic, it is natural that his critical opinions should not have been erected into any system. But while they are essentially desultory, they are the ideas of a man whose information and enthusiasm extended through a wide range of studies; and they are rendered impressive by the abundance, variety, and energy, which mark them as characteristic of Scott.

[1] *Letters to Heber*, p. 63; *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 496.

CHAPTER III

Scott's Work as Student and Editor in the Field of Literary History

THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border

Scott's early interest in ballads — Casual origin of the *Minstrelsy* — Importance of the book in Scott's career — Plan of the book — Mediaeval scholarship of Scott's time — His theory as to the origin of ballads and their deterioration — His attitude toward the work of previous editors — His method of forming texts — Kinds of changes he made — His qualifications for emending old poetry — Modern imitations of the ballad included in the *Minstrelsy* — Remarks on the ballad style — Impossibility of a scientific treatment of folk-poetry in Scott's time — Real importance of the *Minstrelsy*.

We think of the *Border Minstrelsy* as the first work which resulted from the preparation of Scott's whole youth, between the days when he insisted on shouting the lines of *Hardyknute* into the ears of the irate clergyman making a parish call, and the time when he and his equally ardent friends gathered their ballads from the lips of old women among the hills. But we have seen that the inspiration for his first attempts at writing poetry came only indirectly from the ballads of his own country. We learn from the introduction to the third part of the *Minstrelsy* that some of the young men of Scott's circle in Edinburgh were stimulated by what the novelist, Henry Mackenzie, told them of the beauties of German literature, to form a class for the study of that language. This was when Scott was twenty-one, but it was still four years before he found himself writing those translations which mark the sufficiently modest beginning of his literary career. His enthusiasm for German literature was not at first tempered by any critical discrimination, if we may judge from the opinions of one or two

of his friends who labored to point out to him the extravagance and false sentiment which he was too ready to admire along with the real genius of some of his models.[1] Apparently their efforts were useful, for in a review written in 1806 we find Scott, in a remark on Bürger, referring to "the taste for outrageous sensibility, which disgraces most German poetry."[2] His special interest in the Germans was an early mood which seems not to have returned. After the process of translation had discovered to him his verse-making faculty, he naturally passed on to the writing of original poems, and circumstances of a half accidental sort determined that the Scottish ballads which he had always loved should absorb his attention for the next two or three years.

The publication of a book of ballads was first suggested by Scott as an opportunity for his friend Ballantyne to exhibit his skill as a printer and so increase his business. "I have been for years collecting old Border ballads," Scott remarked, "and I think I could with little trouble put together such a selection from them as might make a neat little volume to sell for four or five shillings."[3] From this casual proposition resulted *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* published in three volumes in 1802–3 and often revised and reissued during the editor's lifetime.

This book and the prefaces to his own novels are likely to be thought of first when Scott is spoken of as a critic. The connection between the *Minstrelsy* and the novels has often been pointed out, ever since the day of the contemporary who, on reading the ballads with their introductions, exclaimed that in that book were the elements of a hundred historical romances.[4] The interest of the earlier work is undoubtedly multiplied by the associations in the light of which we read it—associations connected with the editor's whole experience as an author, from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* to *Castle Dangerous.*

Important as the *Minstrelsy* is from the point of view of literary criticism, the material of its introductions is chiefly

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 177.

[2] Review of *Poems of William Herbert, Edinburgh Review,* October, 1806.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, pp. 275–6.

[4] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 333.

historical. The introduction in the original edition gives an account of life on the Border in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the outlines of many of the events that stimulated ballad-making, and an analysis of the temper of the Marchmen among whom this kind of poetry flourished; then by special introductions and notes to the poems an attempt is made to explain both the incidents on which they seem to have been founded, and parallel cases that appear in tradition or record. Some enthusiastic comment is included, of the kind that was so natural to Scott, on the effect of ballad poetry upon a spirited and warlike people. The writer continues: "But it is not the Editor's present intention to enter upon a history of Border poetry; a subject of great difficulty, and which the extent of his information does not as yet permit him to engage in." It was, in fact, nearly thirty years later[1] that Scott wrote the *Remarks on Popular Poetry* which since that date have formed an introduction to the book, as well as the essay, *On Imitations of the Ancient Ballad,* which at present precedes the third part. The more purely literary side of the editor's duty —leaving out of account the modern poems written by Scott and others—was exhibited chiefly in the construction of texts, a matter of which I shall speak later, after considering his views of the origin and character of folk-poetry in general.

But first we may recall the fact that Scott was following a fairly well established vogue in giving scholarly attention to ancient popular poetry. A revival of interest in the study of mediaeval literature had been stimulated in England by the publication of Percy's *Reliques* in 1765 and Warton's *History of English Poetry* in 1774. In 1800 there were enough well-known antiquaries to keep Scott from being in any sense lonely. Among them Joseph Ritson[2] was the most learned, but he was crotchety in the extreme; and while his notions as to

[1] In 1830.

[2] Ritson's principal works were as follows: *Select Collection of English Songs* (1783); *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry from Authentic Manuscripts and Old Printed Copies* (1791); *Ancient Songs from the Time of Henry III. to the Revolution* (1792); *Scottish Songs with the Genuine Music* (1794); *Poems by Laurence Minot* (1795); *Robin Hood Poems* (1795); *Ancient English Metrical Romances* (1802).

research were in advance of his time, his controversial style resembled that of the seventeenth century. George Ellis,[1] on the other hand, was distinguished by an eighteenth-century urbanity, and his combination of learning and good taste fitted him to influence a broader public than that of specialists. At the same time he was a delightful and stimulating friend to other scholars. Southey was becoming known as an authority on the history and literature of the Spanish peninsula. A review in the *Quarterly* a dozen years later mentions these three,—Ellis, Scott, and Southey,—as "good men and true" to serve as guides in the remote realms of literature.[2] Ellis's friend, John Hookham Frere, had great abilities but was an incurable dillettante. Scott particularly admired a Middle-English version of *The Battle of Brunanburgh* which Frere wrote in his school-boy days, and considered him an authoritative critic of mediaeval English poetry. Robert Surtees[3] and Francis Douce[4] were antiquaries of some importance, and both, like all the others named, were friends of Scott. Mr. Herford calls this period a day of "Specimens" and extracts: "Mediaeval romance was studied in Ellis's *Specimens*," he says, "the Elizabethan drama in Lamb's, literary history at large in D'Israeli's gently garrulous compilations of its 'quarrels,' 'amenities,' 'calamities,' and 'curiosities.'"[5] But the scholarship of the time on the whole is worthy of respect. In the case of ballads and romances notable work had been done before Scott entered the field,[6] and he and his contemporaries

[1] Ellis published his *Specimens of the Early English Poets* in 1790, and it was reissued with the addition of the Introduction in 1801 and 1803. He edited also Way's translations of the Fabliaux (1796), and *Specimens of Early English Romances in Metre* (1805).

[2] Review of Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, July, 1815.

[3] The *Magnum Opus* of Robert Surtees was his *History of Durham*, published 1816–1840.

[4] Douce published *Illustrations of Shakespeare* in 1807. Later he edited *Arnold's Chronicle; Judicium, a Pageant;* and a metrical *Life of St. Robert.* The two latter, which appeared in 1822 and 1824, were done for the Roxburghe Club. In 1824 he also wrote some notes for Warton's *History of English Poetry.*

[5] *Age of Wordsworth*, p. 39.

[6] A number of volumes containing old ballads together with modern imitations had been published both before and after the appearance of Percy's *Reliques*, but Ritson's collections were the first, except Percy's, to treat the material in a scholarly way.

were carrying out the promise of the half century before them —continuing the work that Percy and Warton had begun.

Among the problems connected with ballad study, that which arises first is naturally the question of origins. Scott made no attempt to formulate a theory different in any main element from that which was held by his predecessors. He agreed with Percy that ballads were composed and sung by minstrels, and based his discussion on the materials brought forward by Percy and Ritson for use in their great controversy.[1] Ritson himself never doubted that ballads were composed and sung by individual authors, though he might refuse to call them minstrels. The idea of communal authorship, which Jacob Grimm was to suggest only half a dozen years after the first edition of the *Minstrelsy,* would doubtless have been rejected by Scott, even if he had considered it. But we have no evidence that he did so. Probably he did not, as he never felt the need of a new theory.[2]

[1] The discussion centered upon the social and literary position of minstrels. The first edition of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* published in 1765, contained an essay on the History of Minstrelsy, and one on the Origin of the Metrical Romances, which, taken together, says Mr. Courthope, "may be said to furnish the first generalized theory of the nature of mediæval poetry." (*History of English Poetry,* Vol. I, p. 426.) Percy considered the minstrels as the authors of the compositions which they sang to the harp, and as holding a dignified social position similar to that of the Anglo-Saxon scôp or the old Norse scald. This theory was vigorously attacked by Joseph Ritson in the preface of his *Select Collection of English Songs* in 1783, and again in his *Ancient English Metrical Romances* in 1802, and in his essay On the Ancient English Minstrels in Ancient Songs and Ballads (1792). Ritson contended that minstrels were musical performers of a low class, or even acrobats, and that they were not literary composers. Scott used his knowledge of ballads and romances and the customs depicted in them to reinforce his own decision that the truth lay somewhere between the two extremes. He pointed out that the word may have covered a wide variety of professional entertainers. A modern comment (by E. K. Chambers, in *The Mediaeval Stage,* Vol. I, p. 66) seems like an echo of Scott: "This general antithesis between the higher and lower minstrelsy may now, perhaps, be regarded as established. It was the neglect of it, surely, that led to that curious and barren logomachy between Percy and Ritson, in which neither of the disputants can be said to have had hold of more than a bare half of the truth."

[2] Scott's theory as to the authorship of ballads is even now held by Mr. Courthope. At the end of his chapter on Minstrelsy, in *The History of English Poetry,* he thus sums up the matter: "All the evidence cited in

Scott's opinion in regard to the transmission of ballads followed naturally from his theory of their origin. His aristocratic instincts perhaps helped to determine his belief that ballads were composed by gifted minstrels, and that they had deteriorated in the process of being handed down by recitation. He called tradition "a sort of perverted alchymy which converts gold into lead." "All that is abstractedly poetical," he said, "all that is above the comprehension of the merest peasant, is apt to escape in frequent repetition; and the *lacunae* thus created are filled up either by lines from other ditties or from the mother wit of the reciter or singer. The injury, in either case, is obvious and irreparable."[1] From this point of view Scott considered that the ballads were only getting their rights when a skilful hand gave them such a retouching as should enable them to appear in something of what he called their original vigor.[2]

We may learn what qualities he considered necessary for an editor in this field, from the latter part of his *Remarks on Popular Poetry,* in which he discusses previous attempts to collect English and Scottish ballads. Of Percy he speaks in the highest terms, here and elsewhere. We have seen that he felt

this chapter shows that, so far from the ballad being a spontaneous product of popular imagination, it was a type of poem adapted by the professors of the declining art of minstrelsy, from the romances once in favour with the educated classes. Everything in the ballad—matter, form, composition —is the work of the minstrel; all that the people do is to remember and repeat what the minstrel has put together." This statement represents a position which is actively assailed by the adherents of the communal origin theory. Another critical idea which originated in Germany, and in which Scott had no interest, though he knew something about it, was the Wolffian hypothesis in regard to the Homeric poems. He once heard Coleridge expound the subject, but failed to join in the discussion. (*Journal,* Vol. II, p. 164; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 193.) He said the theory could never be held by any *poet.* See a note by Lockhart on the essay on *Popular Poetry.* Henderson's edition of *Minstrelsy,* Vol. I, p. 3.

[1] Review of Cromek's *Reliques of Burns. Quarterly Review,* February, 1809.

[2] "No one but Burns ever succeeded in patching up old Scottish songs with any good effect," Scott wrote in his *Journal* (Vol. II, p. 25). And in his review of Cromek's *Reliques of Burns* he said on the same subject of Scottish songs: "Few, whether serious or humorous, past through his hands without receiving some of those magic touches which, without greatly altering the song, restored its original spirit, or gave it more than it had ever possessed." (*Quarterly,* February, 1809.)

a strong sympathy with Percy's desire to dress up the ballads and make them as attractive to the public as their intrinsic charms render them to their friends. He did not of course realize the extent to which the Bishop reworked his materials, as the publication of the folio manuscript has since revealed it, and Ritson's captious remarks on the subject were naturally discounted on the score of their ill-temper. But it is not to be doubted that Ritson had an appreciable effect on Scott's attitude, by stirring him up to some comprehension of the things that might be said in favor even of dull accuracy. Ritson's collections are cited in their place, with a tribute to the extreme fidelity of their editor. It is a pity that this accurate scholar could not have had a sufficient amount of literary taste, to say nothing of good manners, to inspire others with a fuller trust in his method. Scott expresses impatience with him for seeming to prefer the less effective text in many instances, "as if a poem was not more likely to be deteriorated than improved by passing through the mouths of many reciters."[1] He admitted, however, that it was not in his own period necessary to rework the ballads as much as Bishop Percy had done, since the *Reliques* had already created an audience for popular poetry. His purpose evidently was to steer a middle course between such graceful but sophisticated versions as were given in the *Reliques,* and the exact transcript of everything to be gathered from tradition, whether interesting or not, that was attempted by Ritson. In his later revisions he gave way more than at first to his natural impulse in favor of the added graces which he could supply.[2]

It is easy to see how his own contributions of word and phrase might slip in, since his avowed method was to collate the different texts secured from manuscripts or recitation or both, and so to give what to his mind was the worthiest version. Believing that the ballads had been composed by men not unlike himself, he assumed, in the manner well known to classical text-critics, that his familiarity with the conditions of the

[1] *Remarks on Popular Poetry,* Henderson's edition of *Minstrelsy,* Vol. I, p. 46.

[2] Henderson's edition of *Minstrelsy,* Vol. I, p. xix.

ancient social order gave him some license for changing here and there a word or a line. In determining which stanzas or lines to choose, when choice was possible, he was guided by his antiquarian knowledge and by the general principle of selecting the most poetic rendering among those at his command. This was his way of showing his respect for the minstrel bards of whom he was fond of considering himself a successor.

So far it is perfectly easy to take his point of view. But it is more difficult to reconcile his practice with his professions. We find this declaration in the forefront of the book: "No liberties have been taken either with the recited or written copies of these ballads, farther than that, where they disagreed, which is by no means unusual, the editor, in justice to the author, has uniformly preserved what seemed to him the best or most poetical rendering of the passage. . . . Some arrangement was also occasionally necessary to recover the rhyme, which was often, by the ignorance of the reciters, transposed or thrown into the middle of the line. With these freedoms, which were essentially necessary to remove obvious corruptions and fit the ballads for the press, the editor presents them to the public, under the complete assurance that they carry with them the most indisputable marks of their authenticity."[1] In the face of this fair announcement we are surprised, to say the least, at the number of lines and stanzas which scholars have discovered to be of Scott's own composition.[2]

[1] Henderson's edition of *Minstrelsy*, Vol. I, pp. 167–8.

[2] The matter may be traced in Child's collection of ballads, or more easily in the latest edition of the *Minstrelsy*, edited by T. F. Henderson and published in four volumes in 1902. Mr. Henderson's views of ballad origins are quite in accord with Scott's own, but he notes the points at which Scott failed to follow any originals. There seems to be some reason to believe, however, though Mr. Henderson does not say so, that Scott wrote *Kinmont Willie* without any originals at all, except the very similar situations in three or four other ballads. See the introduction by Professor Kittredge to the abridged edition of Child's ballads, edited by himself and Helen Child Sargent.

It is unnecessary to give here any detailed account of Scott's procedure, as the matter has been thoroughly worked out by students of ballads. A few examples may be given as illustrations, however. In *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow* (Henderson's edition, Vol. III, p. 173) 28 lines out of the 68

Occasionally his notes give some slight indication of his method of treatment, as for instance this, on *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow:* "The editor found it easy to collect a variety of copies; but very difficult indeed to select from them such a collated edition as might in any degree suit the taste of 'these more light and giddy-paced times.'" Notes on some others of the ballads say that "a few conjectural emendations have been found necessary," but no one of these remarks would seem really ingenuous in a modern scholar when we consider how far the "conjectural emendations" extended. Moreover, changes were often made without the slightest clue in introduction or note.[1]

The case was complicated for Scott by the poetical tastes of his assistants. Leyden[2] was apparently quite capable of taking

are noted by Mr. Henderson as either changed or added by Scott. Scott writes (beginning of fifth stanza), "As he gaed up the Tennies bank" for "As he gaed up yon high, high hill," and we find from a note of Lockhart's that *The Tennies* is the name of a farm belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch. In the sixth stanza Scott changes the lines,

"O ir ye come to drink the wine
As we hae done before, O?" to
"O come ye here to part your land,
The bonnie forest thorough?"

In the seventeenth stanza he changes,

"A better rose will never spring
Than him I've lost on Yarrow?" to
"A fairer rose did never bloom
Than now lies cropp'd on Yarrow."

In *Jellon Grame* (Vol. III, p. 203), Mr. Henderson notes changes in 15 different lines, and points out 2 whole stanzas, out of the 21, that are interpolated. In the *Gay Goss-hawk* (Vol. III, p. 187) 6 stanzas out of 39 are noted as probably wholly or mainly by Scott, and 30 stanzas were changed by him. Sometimes his alterations occurred in every line of a stanza. It is probable that Scott changed *Jamie Telfer* enough to make the Scotts take the place of prominence that had been held by the Elliotts in the original form of the story. See *The Trustworthiness of Border Ballads as Exemplified by 'Jamie Telfer i' the Fair Dodhead' and other Ballads;* by Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Fitzwilliam Elliott. Reviewed in *Edinburgh Review,* No. 418, p. 306 (October, 1906).

[1] See the examples given in the preceding note. Most of the changes there spoken of were made without annotation.

[2] This extraordinary young man was poet and scholar on his own account by 1800, though he was four years younger than Scott. His erudition in many fields was remarkable, and he was as enthusiastic as Scott himself about Scotch poetry, and was the chief assistant in gathering ballads for

down a ballad from recitation in such a way as to produce a more finished poem than one would expect a traditional ballad to be. And Hogg,[1] who supplied several ballads from the recitations of his mother and other old people, was probably still less strict. "Sure no man," he is quoted as having said, "will think an old song the worse of being somewhat harmonious."[2] Yet it is easy to see that Scott's friends might have acted differently if his own practice had favored absolute fidelity to the texts.

A remark in Scott's review of Evans's *Old Ballads* seems a pretty definite arraignment of his own procedure. "It may be asked by the severer antiquary of the present day, why an editor, thinking it necessary to introduce such alterations in order to bring forth a new, beautiful, and interesting sense from a meagre or corrupted original, did not in good faith to his readers acquaint them with the liberties he had taken and make them judge whether in so doing he transgressed his limits. We answer that unquestionably such would be the express duty of a modern editor, but such were not the rules of the service when Dr. Percy first opened the campaign."[3]

One wonders whether the "rules of the service" did not in Scott's opinion occasionally permit a little wilful mystification. The case of *Kinmont Willie* tempts one to such an explanation.

the *Minstrelsy*. He also collected the material for the essay on Fairies in the second volume, which was especially praised by the reviewer in the *Edinburgh Review* (January, 1803). Leyden's chief fame was derived from his wonderfully varied activities in India, from 1803 to his early death in 1811. Any reader of Lockhart's *Life of Scott* or of Scott's delightful little memoir, published first in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1811, and included in the *Miscellaneous Prose Works*, must feel that the uncouth young genius is a familiar acquaintance.

[1] The Ettrick Shepherd, who, after reading the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, sought an acquaintance with Scott, and offered assistance which was gladly made use of in the preparation of the third volume. Scott in his turn provided much of the material for Hogg's *Jacobite Relics*, published in 1819. The following note on one of the songs in that work adds to the reader's doubts concerning the accuracy of Scott's texts: "I have not altered a word from the manuscript, which is in the handwriting of an amanuensis of Mr. Scott's, the most incorrect transcriber, perhaps, that ever tried the business." (*Jacobite Relics*, Vol. I, p. 282. Note on song lxiii.)

[2] Henderson's edition of the *Minstrelsy*, Vol. I, p. 284.

[3] *Quarterly*, May, 1810.

Besides the capital instance of his anonymity as regards the novels, Scott several times seemed to amuse himself in perplexing the public. There was the case of the *Bridal of Triermain,* which he tried by means of various careful devices to pass off as the work of a friend. But perhaps the best example appears in connection with *The Fortunes of Nigel.* He first designed the material of that book for a series of "private letters" purporting to have been written in the reign of James I., but when he had finally complied with the advice of his friends and used it for a novel, he said to Lockhart, "You were all quite right: if the letters had passed for genuine, they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries."[1] This suggests comparison with the conduct of his friend Robert Surtees, who palmed off upon him three whole ballads of his own and got them inserted in the *Minstrelsy* as ancient, with a plausible tale concerning the circumstances of their recovery. Surtees, one is interested to observe, never dared tell Scott the truth, and Scott always accepted the ballads as genuine—a lack of discernment rather compromising in an editor, though one may perhaps excuse him on the ground of his confidence in his brother antiquary.[2]

In one direction Scott seems to have been more conscientious than we might be inclined to suppose after seeing the discrepancy between the standard of exactness that his own statements lead us to expect and the results that actually appear. I believe that he intended to preserve the manuscript texts just as he received them, and that he would have wished to have them given to the public when the public was prepared to want them. To support this theory we have first the fact that most of his own emendations have been traced by means of the manu-

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 514.

[2] Still more striking evidence that Scott lacked an infallible sense of the difference between genuine and spurious ballad material is afforded by his comments on Peter Buchan's collection, which is now considered particularly untrustworthy. He thought that with two or three exceptions the pieces in the book were genuine, and said: "I scarce know anything so easily discovered as the piecing and patching of an old ballad; the darns in a silk stocking are not more manifest." (*Correspondence of C. K. Sharpe,* Vol. II, p. 424.)

scripts which he used.[1] It is significant that in speaking of a poet who had altered a manuscript to suit a revised reading he grew indignant over that fault far more than over the mere change in the published version. *The Raid of the Reidswire,* he said, "first appeared in Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen,* but some liberties have been taken by him in transcribing it; and, what is altogether unpardonable, the manuscript, which is itself rather inaccurate, has been interpolated to favour his readings; of which there remain obvious marks."[2] Scott said also that the time had come for the publication of Percy's folio manuscript; though we must believe that he would not have wished to see the manuscript published until the ballads had become familiar to the world in what he considered a beautified form.

The changes Scott made were usually in style rather than in substance. Often he merely substituted an archaic word for a modern one; but often whole lines and longer passages offered temptations which the poet in him could not resist, and he "improved" lavishly. For example, we have his note on *Earl Richard*—"The best verses are here selected from both copies, and some trivial alterations have been adopted from tradition,"—with the comment by Mr. Henderson—"The emendations of Scott are so many, and the majority relate so entirely to style, that no mere tradition could have supplied them."[3] His versions are in general characterized by a smoothness and precision of meter which to the student of ballads is very suspicious. But he seems occasionally to have altered or supplied incidents as well as phrases. The historical event

[1] Scott's manuscript collections of ballads dropped partially out of sight after his death, and it was only about 1890 that their magnitude and importance became known. Professor Child and later editors have found them of very great service. (On Child's use of the Abbotsford materials, see the Advertisement to Part VIII of his collection, contained in Volume IV.) In 1880 appeared a reprint of the *Ballad Book* of C. K. Sharpe, "with notes and ballads from the unpublished manuscripts of C. K. Sharpe and Sir Walter Scott," but the contributions from Scott's papers did not amount to much. Scott's materials were at the service of his friend for use in the original edition of the *Ballad Book,* published in 1823. See *Sharpe's Correspondence,* Vol. II, pp. 264, 271 and 325, for letters from Scott on this subject.

[2] Note on *The Raid of the Reidswire,* in the *Minstrelsy.*

[3] Henderson's edition of the *Minstrelsy,* Vol. III, p. 232.

which furnished the purpose for the expedition of Sir Patrick Spens seems to have been introduced into the ballad by Scott, and Mr. Henderson thinks that "when the deeds of his ancestors were concerned it was impossible for him to resist the temptation to employ some of his own minstrel art on their behalf."[1]

Certainly Scott's qualifications for evolving true poetry out of the crude fragments that sometimes served as a basis formed a very unusual combination when they were united with his knowledge of early history and literature. He had such confidence in his own powers in this direction that he at one time intended to write a series of imitations of Scottish poets of different periods, from Thomas the Rhymer down, and thus to exhibit changes in language as well as variations in literary style.[2] He evidently thought that the ballads as they appeared in the *Minstrelsy* were truer to their originals than were the copies he was able to procure from recitation. Lockhart gives him precisely the kind of praise he would have desired, in saying, "From among a hundred corruptions he seized with instinctive tact the primitive diction and imagery."[3]

It is evident that Scott's public did not wish him to be more careful than he was in discriminating between new and old matter. One of his moments of strict veracity seems even to have occasioned some annoyance to the writer of the *Edinburgh* article, who apparently preferred to believe in the antiquity of *The Flowers of the Forest* rather than to learn that "the most positive evidence" proved its modern origin. The editor's introduction to the poem seems perfectly clear; he names his authority and quotes two verses which are ancient;[4] but the reviewer says with a perverse irritability: "Mr. Scott would have done well to tell us how much he deems ancient, and to give us the 'positive evidence' that convinced him *the whole* was not so."[5] This review was, however, for the most part favorable.

The fact that Scott included modern imitations of the ballad

[1] Henderson's edition of the *Minstrelsy*, Vol. II, p. 57.
[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 360. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 332.
[4] First edition of the *Minstrelsy*, Vol. II, pp. 156–7.
[5] *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1803.

in his book is another indication that his attitude was like that of his predecessors.[1] Doubtless these helped the *Minstrelsy* to sell, but a more modern taste would choose to put them in a place by themselves, not in a collection of old ballads. An essay on *Imitations of the Ancient Ballad* was written, as were the *Remarks on Popular Poetry,* for the 1833 edition. It is chiefly interesting for its autobiographical matter, though it also contains criticisms of Burns and other writers of ballad poetry—"a species of literary labour which the author has himself pursued with some success."[2] Scott's statement that the ballad style was very popular at the time he began to write, and that he followed the prevailing fashion, was one of many examples of his modesty, taken in connection with the remark in another part of the essay to the effect that this style "had much to recommend it, especially as it presented considerable facilities to those who wished at as little exertion or trouble as possible to attain for themselves a certain degree of literary reputation." To complete the comparison, however, we need an observation found in one of Scott's reviews, on the spurious ballad poetry, full of false sentiment, sometimes written in the eighteenth century. "It is the very last refuge of those who can do nothing better in the shape of verse; and a man

[1] The *Minstrelsy* is arranged in three parts: I., Historical Ballads; II., Romantic Ballads; III., Imitations of the Ballad. The first part is preceded by the Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry, and by the historical introduction. The second part is preceded by the essay on The Fairies of Popular Superstition; and the third by the essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad. The poems by Scott given in this third part are as follows: *Thomas the Rhymer* (parts 2 and 3), *Glenfinlas, The Eve of St. John, Cadyow Castle, The Gray Brother, War Song of the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons.* Besides these there are three poems by John Leyden (and he has also an *Ode on Scottish Music* preceding the Romantic ballads), two by C. K. Sharpe, three by John Marriott, who was tutor to the children of the Duke of Buccleuch, and one each by Matthew Lewis, Anna Seward, Dr. Jamieson, Colin Mackenzie, J. B. S. Morritt, and an unnamed author. In the other parts of the book there are a few imitations, notably the three by Surtees—*Lord Ewine,* the *Death of Featherstonhaugh,* and *Barthram's Dirge,* which Scott supposed were old; and one or two like the *Flowers of the Forest,* which he noted as largely modern, or which he had found, after arranging his material, to be wholly modern. Nearly forty old ballads were published in the *Minstrelsy* for the first time.

[2] *Remarks on Popular Poetry,* conclusion.

of genius should disdain to invade the province of these dawdling rhymers."[1]

Scott's criticism of ballad style probably suffered from his interest in modern imitations of ballads. Perhaps also the real quality of ancient popular poetry was a little obscured for him by his belief that it was written by professional or semi-professional poets. If he wrote *Kinmont Willie,* he succeeded in catching the right tone better than anyone since him has been able to do, but even in this poem there are turns of phrase that remind one of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* rather than of the true folk-song.[2] After his first attempts at versifying he received from William Taylor, of Norwich, who had made an earlier translation of Bürger's *Lenore,* a letter of hearty praise intermingled with very sensible remarks about the tendency in some parts of Scott's *Chase* toward too great elaboration.[3] Scott's answer was as follows: "I do not . . . think quite so severely of the Darwinian style, as to deem it utterly inconsistent with the ballad, which, at least to judge from the examples left us by antiquity, admits in some cases of a considerable degree of decoration. Still, however, I do most sincerely agree with you, that this may be very easily overdone, and I am far from asserting that this may not be in some degree my own case; but there is scarcely so nice a line to distinguish, as that which divides true simplicity from flatness and *Sternholdianism* (if I may be allowed to coin the word), and therefore it is not surprising, that in endeavouring to avoid the latter, so young and inexperienced a rhymer as myself should sometimes have deviated also from the former."[4] This was Scott's earliest stage as a man of letters, and he evidently learned more about ballads later. But there appears in much of his criticism on the subject a limitation which may be assigned partly to his

[1] Review of the Poems of William Herbert. *Edinburgh Review,* October, 1806.

[2] Stanzas 10–12, and 31, are noted by Child as particularly suspicious. "Basnet," which occurs in stanza 10, is not a very common word in ballads. It is used in *The Lay,* Canto I., stanza 25, and in *Marmion,* Canto VI, st. 21.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 221.

[4] *Memoir of William Taylor,* Vol. I, pp. 98–99, and see *Sharpe's Correspondence,* Vol. I, pp. 146–7, for a letter to Sharpe on a similar point.

time, and partly, no doubt, to the fact that he was a poet and could not forget all the sophistications of his art.

The true nature of ballad poetry could hardly be understood until scholars had investigated the structure of primitive society in a way that Scott's contemporaries were not at all prepared to do. Even Scott, with all his intelligent interest in by-gone institutions and modes of expression, could hardly have foreseen the anthropological researches which the problem of literary origins has since demanded. We do not find, then, that Scott's work on ballads was marked by any special originality in point of view or method. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was a notable book because it did better what other men had tried to do, and especially because of the charm and effectiveness of its historical comment. It was more trustworthy than Percy's collection and more graceful than Ritson's; it was richer than other books of the kind in what people cared to have when they wanted ballads, and yet was not, for its time, over-sophisticated. Scott's conclusions cannot now be accepted without question, but the illustrations with which he sets them forth and the wide reading and sincere love of folk-poetry which evidently lie behind them produce a pleasant effect of ripe and reasonable judgment. The admirable qualities of the book were at once recognized by competent critics, and it will always be studied with enthusiasm by scholars as well as by the uncritical lover of ballads.

Studies in the Romances

Scott's theory as to the connection between ballads and romances — His early fondness for romances — His acquaintance with Romance languages — His work on the *Sir Tristrem* — Value of his edition — Special quality of Scott's interest in the Middle Ages — General theories expressed in the body of his work on romances — His type of scholarship.

Ballads and romances are so closely related that Scott's early and lasting interest in the one form naturally grew out of his interest in the other. He held the theory that "the romantic ballads of later times are for the most part abridgments of the ancient metrical romances, narrated in a smoother

stanza and more modern language."[1] It is not surprising, then, that a considerable body of his critical work has to do with the subject of mediaeval romance.

Throughout his boyhood Scott read all the fairy tales, eastern stories, and romances of knight-errantry that fell in his way. When he was about thirteen, he and a young friend used to spend hours reading together such authors as Spenser, Ariosto, and Boiardo.[2] He remembered the poems so well that weeks or months afterwards he could repeat whole pages that had particularly impressed him. Somewhat later the two boys improvised similar stories to recite to each other, Scott being the one who proposed the plan and the more successful in carrying it out. With this same friend he studied Italian and began to read the Italian poets in the original. In his autobiography he says:[3] "I had previously renewed and extended my knowledge of the French language, from the same principle of romantic research. Tressan's romances, the Bibliothèque Bleue, and Bibliothèque de Romans, were already familiar to me, and I now acquired similar intimacy with the works of Dante, Boiardo, Pulci, and other eminent Italian authors." Writing some years later he remarked: "I was once the most enormous devourer of the Italian romantic poetry, which indeed is the only poetry of their country which I ever had much patience for; for after all that has been said of Petrarch and his school, I am always tempted to exclaim like honest Christopher Sly, 'Marvellous good matter, would it were done.' But with Charlemagne and his paladins I could dwell forever."[4] Scott learned languages easily, and he read Spanish with about as much facility as Italian. Don Quixote seems often to be the guide with whom he chooses to traverse the fields of romance.[5] In Scott's boyhood one of his teachers noticed that he could follow and enjoy the meaning of what he

[1] *Minstrelsy*, Introduction to *Lord Thomas and Fair Annie*.

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 101. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 35–6.

[4] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 244. See also *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 408.

[5] Sometime before 1821 (probably a good while before, but the date cannot be fixed), Scott began a translation of *Don Quixote*, and afterwards gave the work over to Lockhart, who completed it. See *Constable's Correspondence*, Vol. III, p. 161.

read in Latin better than many of his school-fellows who knew more about the language, and it was the same all through his life—he got what he wanted from foreign literatures with very little trouble.

Scott constantly refers to the work of Percy, Warton, Tressan,[1] Ritson, and Ellis, in the study of ancient romances, but in editing *Sir Tristrem* he made one part of the field his own, and became the authority whom he felt obliged to quote in the Essay on Romance.

Thomas the Rhymer of Erceldoune was at first an object of interest to Scott because of the ballad of *True Thomas* and the traditions concerning him that floated about the countryside. The "Rhymer's Glen" was afterwards a cherished possession of Scott's own on the Abbotsford estate. In the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, of which Scott was in 1795 appointed a curator, was an important manuscript that contained among other metrical romances one professing to be a copy of that written by Thomas of Erceldoune on Sir Tristrem. From a careful piecing together of evidence furnished by this poem and by Robert of Brunne, with the assistance of certain legal documents which supplied dates, Scott built up about the old poet a theory that he elaborated in his edition of *Sir Tristrem,* published in 1804, and that continued to interest him vividly as long as he lived. It reappears in many of his critical writings[2] and also in the novels. In the *Bride of Lammermoor* Ravenswood goes to his death in compliance with the prophecy of Thomas quoted by the superstitious Caleb Balderstone. And in *Castle Dangerous* Bertram, who is unconvincing perhaps because he is endowed with the literary and antiquarian tastes of a Walter Scott himself, is actuated by an irrepressible desire to discover works of the Rhymer.

[1] Louis-Elizabeth de la Vergne, Comte de Tressan, was born in 1705 and died in 1783. In early life he was sent to Rome on diplomatic business, and it is said that in the Vatican library he acquired his taste for the literature of chivalry. His chief works were *Amadis de Gaules* (1779); *Roland furieux* (translated from the Italian, 1780); *Corps d'extraits romans de chevalerie* (1782). His translations were partly adaptations, and were far from being rendered with precision.

[2] See particularly his article on Ellis's and Ritson's *Metrical Romances* (*Edinburgh Review,* January, 1806), the essay on *Romance,* and *Remarks on Popular Poetry* in the *Minstrelsy.*

Scott's edition of *Sir Tristrem* gives—besides the text, introduction, and notes—a short conclusion written by himself in imitation of the original poet's style. Much of his theory has fallen. He considered this *Sir Tristrem* to be the first of the written versions of that story, a supposition that was not long tenable. The poem is now known to be based upon a French original, and many scholars think the name Erceldoune was arbitrarily inserted by the English translator; though Mr. McNeill, the latest editor, thinks there is a "reasonable probability" in favor of Scott's opinion that the author was the historic Thomas, who flourished in the thirteenth century. It is important, however, that Scott's scholarship in the matter passed muster at that time with such men as Ellis, who wrote the review in the *Edinburgh,* in which he said, "Upon the whole we are much disposed to adopt the general inferences drawn by Mr. Scott from his authorities, and have great pleasure in bearing testimony to the very uncommon diligence which he has evinced in collecting curious materials, and to the taste and sagacity with which he has employed them. . . . With regard to the notes, they contain an almost infinite variety of curious information, which had been hitherto unknown or unnoticed."[1] John Hookham Frere said, as quoted in a letter by Ellis, "I consider *Sir Tristrem* as by far the most interesting work that has as yet been published on the subject of our earliest poets."[2] Scott's opinions were in 1824 thought to be of sufficient importance, either from their own merits or on account of his later fame, to call forth a dissertation appended to the edition of Warton's *History of English Poetry* published in that year.

The first edition of the text swarms with errors, according to Kölbing,[3] a recent editor of the romance, and later editions are

Edinburgh Review, July, 1804. Ellis and Scott had had much correspondence on *Sir Tristrem,* and it was Ellis's queries that first led Scott into the detailed investigation which resulted in the separate publication of the work. He had intended to print it in the *Minstrelsy* (*Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 289). The letters are given in *Lockhart,* Vol. I.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 381.

[3] *Die nordische und die englische Version der Tristan-sage*—II. *Sir Tristrem.* Heilbronn, 1882. Mr. George P. McNeill's edition of *Sir Tristrem* was printed for the Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1886.

still very inaccurate. It could hardly be expected that a man with Scott's habits of mind would edit a text accurately. But no one of that period was competent to construct a text that would seem satisfactory now. The study of English philology was not sufficiently developed in that direction, nor did scholars appreciate either the difficulties or the requirements of text-criticism. It is not to be wondered at that Scott failed, in this instance as well as afterwards in the case of the text of Dryden, to give a version that would stand the minute scrutiny of later scholarship.

His sympathies were rather with the scholar who opens the store of old poetry to the public, than with him who uses his erudition simply for the benefit of erudite people. The diction of the Middle Ages was interesting to him only as it reflected the customs and emotions of its period. He used the romances as authorities on ancient manners. The *Chronicles* of Froissart, because they give "a knowledge of mankind,"[2] were almost as much a hobby with him as Thomas the Rhymer, and in this case also he endows characters in his novels with his own fondness for the ancient writer.[3] The fruit of Scott's acquaintance with Froissart appears prominently in his essay on *Chivalry* and in various introductions to ballads in the *Minstrelsy,* as well as in the novels of chivalry. Scott at one time

[1] Kölbing thinks Scott probably hired a transcriber who knew nothing of Middle English—a usual method of procedure in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In later editions more errors were introduced by the carelessness of printers, until, after 1830, when the book was included in the complete editions of Scott's poems, the text was collated with the manuscript. But it was still far from correct. Kölbing enumerates about a hundred and thirty mistakes (see his Introduction, p. xvii). Of these I took twenty-one at random, and found that eight of them did not occur in the 1806 edition—in other words, the person who collated the text nearly thirty years after Scott or his hired transcriber had done it was far from infallible. A few illustrations may be given of mistakes that occur in both the 1806 and the 1833 editions: l. 117, *send* is given for *sent;* l. 846, *telle* for *tel;* l. 863, *How* for *Hou;* l. 912, *mak* for *make;* l. 1212, *leuedi* for *leuedy;* l. 1580, *wende sche weren* for *whende sche were;* l. 1334, *haue* for *han;* l. 1514, *as* for *als.*

[2] Review of Johnes's Translation of Froissart, *Edinburgh Review,* January, 1805.

[3] Waverley, and Claverhouse in *Old Mortality.*

proposed to publish an edition of Malory, but abandoned the project on learning that Southey had the same thing in mind.[1]

The first periodical review Scott ever published was on the subject of the *Amadis de Gaul,* as translated by Southey and by Rose. The article is long and very carefully constructed, and expresses many ideas on the subject of the mediaeval romance in general that reappear again and again, particularly in the essay on *Romance* written in 1823 for the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Among these general ideas that found frequent expression in his critical writings, one which in the light of his creative work becomes particularly interesting to us is his judgment on the distinctions between metrical and prose romances. He always preferred the poems, though he was so interested in the prose stories that he talked about them with much enthusiasm, and it sometimes seems as if he liked best the kind he happened to be analyzing at the moment.

Other matters that necessarily presented themselves when he was treating the subject of romance were the problem of the sources of narrative material, especially the perplexed question concerning the development of the Arthurian cycle, and the problem, already discussed in connection with ballads, concerning the character of minstrels. The minstrels reappear throughout Scott's studies in mediaeval literature, and were perhaps more interesting to him than any other part of the subject. Though, as we have seen, he formulated a compromise between the opposing opinions of Percy and Ritson, no one who reads the description of the Last Minstrel can doubt what was the picture that he preferred to carry in his mind.

His ideas on the subject of the origin and diffusion of narrative material were those of the sensible man trying to look at the matter in a reasonable way. Here again he adopted an attitude of compromise, in that he admitted the partial truth of various theories which he considered erroneous only in so far as any one of them was stretched beyond its proper compass. "Romance," he said, "was like a compound metal, derived from various mines, and in the different specimens of which one metal or other was alternately predominant."[2]

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, pp. 480 and 482. *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 147.
[2] *Essay on Romance.*

On the subject of the Arthurian cycle, the origin of which has never ceased to be matter for debate, he held essentially the opinions that the highest French authority has adopted—that Celtic traditions were the foundation, and that the metrical romances preceded those in prose.[1] The important offices of French poets in giving form to the story he underestimated. When he said, "It is now completely proved, that the earliest and best French romances were composed for the meridian of the English court,"[2] he fell into the error that has not always been avoided by scholars who have since written on the subject, of feeling certitude about a proposition in which there is no certainty.

Scott's work on romances, though it does not always rise above commonplaceness, escapes the perfunctory quality of hack writing by virtue of his keen interest in the subject. He continued to like this prosaic kind of literary task even while he was writing novels with the most wonderful facility. We may judge not only by the fact that he continued to write reviews at intervals throughout his life, but by an explicit reference in his *Journal:* "I toiled manfully at the review till two o'clock, commencing at seven. I fear it will be uninteresting, but I like the muddling work of antiquities, and besides wish to record my sentiments with regard to the Gothic question."[3]

It is evident that Scott did not himself find the "muddling work of antiquities" dull, because he realized, emotionally as well as intellectually, the life of past times. This led him to form broader views than the ordinary student constructs out of his knowledge of special facts. An admirable illustration of this characteristic occurs in the essay on Romance, at the point where Scott is discussing the social position of the minstrels, in the light of what Percy and Ritson had said on the subject. He goes on: "In fact, neither of these excellent antiquaries has cast a general or philosophic glance on the necessary condition of a set of men, who were by profession the instruments of the pleasure of others during a period of society

[1] See Gaston Paris, *La Littérature Française au Moyen Age,* 1ère partie, ch. IV.

[2] Review of *Metrical Romances, Edinburgh Review,* January, 1806.

[3] *Journal,* Vol. II, pp. 258–259.

such as was presented in the Middle Ages." There follows a detailed and very interesting account of what the writer's own "philosophic glance" leads him to believe. The method is useful but dangerous; in the same essay occurs an amusing example of what philosophy may do when it is given free rein. Within two pages appear these conflicting statements: "The Metrical Romances, though in some instances sent to the press, were not very fit to be published in this form. The dull amplifications, which passed well enough in the course of a half-heard recitation, became intolerable when subjected to the eye." "The Metrical Romances in some instances indeed ran to great length, but were much exceeded in that particular by the folios which were written on the same or similar topics by their prose successors. Probably the latter judiciously reflected that a book which addresses itself only to the eyes may be laid aside when it becomes tiresome to the reader; whereas it may not always have been so easy to stop the minstrel in the full career of his metrical declamation." Flaws like this may be picked in the details of Scott's method, just as we may sometimes find fault with the lapses in his mediaeval scholarship. We do him no injustice when we say that aside from certain aspects of his work on the ballads and *Sir Tristrem,* his achievement was that of a popularizer of learning.

But if he lacked some of the authority of erudition, he escaped also the induration of pedantry. In writing of remote and dimly known periods, critics are perhaps most apt to show their defects of temper, and Scott often commented on the acerbity of spirit which such studies seem to induce. "Antiquaries," he said, "are apt to be both positive and polemical upon the very points which are least susceptible of proof, and which are least valuable if the truth could be ascertained; and which therefore we would gladly have seen handled with more diffidence and better temper in proportion to their uncertainty."[1] Of Ritson he says many times in one form or another that his "severe accuracy was connected with an unhappy eagerness and irritability of temper." Scott rode his own hobbies with an expansive cheerfulness that did not at all hinder them from being essentially serious.

[1] *Essay on Romance.*

Other Studies in Mediaeval Literature

Scott's attitude on the Ossianic controversy — His slight acquaintance with other northern literatures — Anglo-Saxon scholarship of the time — Character of his familiarity with Middle-English poetry — His opinions in regard to Chaucer — General importance of Scott's work on mediaeval literature.

Part of Scott's critical work on mediaeval literature falls outside the limits of the two divisions we have been considering—those of ballad and romance. He knew comparatively little about the early poetry of the northern nations, but at some points his knowledge of Scottish literature made the transition fairly easy to the literature of other Teutonic peoples. But he was especially bound to be interested in the Gaelic, for a Scotsman of his day could hardly avoid forming an opinion in regard to the Ossianic controversy then raging with what Scott thought must be its final violence. He did not understand the Gaelic language,[1] but he had a vivid interest in the Highlanders. The picturesque quality of their customs made it natural enough for him to use them in his novels, and by the "sheer force of genius," says Mr. Palgrave, who considers this Scott's greatest achievement, "he united the sympathies of two hostile races."[2]

As early as 1792 Scott had written for the Speculative Society an essay on the authenticity of Ossian's poems, and one of his articles for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1805 was on the same subject, occasioned by a couple of important documents which supported opposite sides, and which, he said, set the question finally at issue. This article represents Scott the critic in a typical attitude. The material was almost altogether furnished in the works which he was surveying.[3] His task was to distinguish the essential points of the problem,

[1] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 46.

[2] Memoir in the Globe edition of Scott's poems.

[3] Scott adopted the conclusions of Malcolm Laing, who edited Macpherson's poems and adduced parallel passages from "a mass of poetry, enough to serve any six gentle readers for their lifetime," as the reviewer says. The most of these parallels were found in "Homer, Virgil, and their two translators; Milton, Thomson, Young, Gray, Mason, Home, and the English Bible." Although he was convinced by the argument, Scott saw that the editor was in some cases misled by his own ingenuity.

to state them plainly, and to weigh the evidence on each side. In this he shows notable clearness of thought, and also, throughout the rather long treatment of a complicated subject, great lucidity in arrangement and statement. He was led by this study to change the opinion which he had held in common with most of his countrymen, and to adopt the belief that the poems were essentially creations of Macpherson, with only the names and some parts of the story adopted from the Gaelic.[1] Other references to Ossian occur in Scott's writings, and it is evident in this case, as in many others, that an investigation of the matter in his early career, whether from original or from secondary sources, gave him material for allusion and comment throughout his life. For, as we have constant occasion to remark in studying Scott, with a very definite grasp of concrete fact he combined a vigorous generalizing power, and all the parts of his knowledge were actively related. He seems to have made little preparation for some of his most interesting reviews, but to have utilized in them the store gathered in his mind for other purposes.

Of the northern Teutonic languages Scott had slight knowledge, though he was always interested in the northern literatures. In a review of the *Poems of William Herbert,* of which the part most interesting to the reviewer consisted of translations from the Icelandic, Scott says: "We do not pretend any great knowledge of Norse; but we have so far traced the 'Runic rhyme' as to be sensible how much more easy it is to give a just translation of that poetry into English than into Latin." In the same review we find him saying, after a slight discussion of the style of Scaldic poetry, "The other translations are generally less interesting than those from the Icelandic. There is, however, one poem from the Danish, which I transcribe as an instance how very clearly the ancient popular ballad of that country corresponds with our own." So we see him drawing from all sources fuel for his favorite fire—the study of ballads. Very characteristically also Scott suggests

[1] Later, however (in the essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad, 1830), he said: "In their spirit and diction they nearly resemble fragments of poetry extant in Gaelic." By this time he was probably reverting to the earlier opinion which had made the more vivid impression.

that the author should extend his researches to the popular poetry of Scandinavia, "which we cannot help thinking is the real source of many of the tales of our minstrels."[1] It seems probable that Scott's acquaintance with northern literatures came partly through his ill-fated amanuensis, Henry Weber.[2] His acknowledgement in the introduction to *Sir Tristrem* would indicate this, taken together with other references by Scott to Weber's attainments.

Scott could hardly be called a student of Anglo-Saxon, though he was perhaps able to read the language. His remarks on the subject may, however, mean simply that he was familiar with early Middle English.[3] In his essay on Romance he referred to Sharon Turner's account of the story of Beowulf, but called the poem Caedmon, and made no correction when he added the later foot-note in regard to Conybeare's fuller and more interesting analysis published in 1826.[4] The researches of these men indicate the state of Anglo-Saxon scholarship in England. Sharon Turner's very inaccurate description of *Beowulf* was published in 1805. Danish scholars made the first translations of the poem, but no one could give a really

[1] For the *Northern Antiquities*, edited by Robert Jamieson and published in 1814, Scott wrote an abstract of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, using, as one would conclude from his introductory words, the Latin version made by Thorkelin, who published the saga in 1787. The purpose of the publication required the historical and antiquarian rather than the literary point of view, and accordingly we find Scott's notes occupied with historical comment.

[2] In 1804 Weber came to Edinburgh in a deplorable condition of poverty, and was employed and assisted in literary work by Scott during the following nine years. In 1813 he was seized with insanity, and challenged Scott, across the study table, to an immediate duel with pistols. Scott supported Weber during the remaining five years of his life in an insane hospital. He was much liked by the Scott family. Scott rated his learning very highly, and gave him valuable assistance in various literary projects. Weber's chief publications were: *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Sixteenth Centuries*, with Introduction, Notes and Glossary (1810); *Dramatic Works of John Ford*, with Introduction and Explanatory Notes (1811); *Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, with Introduction and Explanatory Notes (1812): to this Scott's notes were the most valuable contribution; *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (1814), with Jamieson and Scott.

[3] See his essay on *Imitations of the Ancient Ballad*.

[4] *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry, translated by the Vicar of Bath-easton*. Conybeare had died two years before the publication of the book.

scholarly text or translation until the year after Scott died, when the first edition by J. M. Kemble appeared. There were students of the language, however, who were doing good work in feeling their way toward a comprehension of its special qualities. One of these was George Ellis. In his *Specimens* he published examples of Anglo-Saxon and Middle-English poetry, and his information was helpful in enlarging Scott's outlook. Scott's own knowledge of Anglo-Saxon literature did not amount to enough to be of importance by itself, but it served perhaps to fortify the basis of his generalizations about all early poetry.

A review of the *Life and Works of Chatterton* gave Scott an opportunity to discuss the characteristics of Middle-English poetry, but his general thesis, that the Rowley poems exhibit graces and refinements which are in marked contrast to the tenuity of idea and tautology of expression found in genuine works of the period, is supported by an argument which seems to be based on a characterization of the romances rather than on a close acquaintance with other Middle-English poetry. We notice a similar quality in what Scott says elsewhere concerning Frere's translation into Chaucerian English of the *Battle of Brunanburgh:* "This appears to us an exquisite imitation of the antiquated English poetry, not depending on an accumulation of hard words like the language of Rowley, which in everything else is refined and harmonious poetry, nor upon an agglomeration of consonants in the orthography, the resource of later and more contemptible forgers, but upon the style itself, upon its alternate strength and weakness, now nervous and concise, now diffuse and eked out by the feeble aid of expletives."[1] Of Middle-English poets other than Chaucer and the author or translator of *Sir Tristrem,* Laurence Minot was the one to whom Scott alluded most frequently, doubtless because in Ritson's edition of Minot that poet had become more accessible than most of his contemporaries. Whatever detailed work Scott did on the poetry of this period was chiefly in connection with *Sir Tristrem,* which has naturally been considered in relation with his other studies in romances.

[1] Review of Ellis's *Specimens, Edinburgh Review,* April, 1804.

Scott's familiarity with Chaucer appears in his numerous quotations from that poet, but usually the passages are cited to illustrate mediaeval manners rather than for any specifically literary purpose. Yet there are Chaucer enthusiasts among the characters of *Woodstock* and *Peveril of the Peak*.[1] Chaucer's fame was well enough established so that Scott seems on the whole to have taken his merit for granted, and not to have said much about it except in casual references.[2] Among general readers he must have been comparatively little known, however, notwithstanding the respect paid him by scholars. In 1805 we find Scott writing to Ellis that his scheme for editing a collection of the British Poets had fallen through, for, he said, "My plan was greatly too liberal to stand the least chance of being adopted by the trade at large, as I wished them to begin with Chaucer. The fact is, I never expected they would agree to it."[3]

Scott's review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer,* one of the best known of his periodical essays, is altogether concerned with the manner in which Godwin did his work, and so exhibits Scott's ideas on the subject of biography and his methods of reviewing rather than his attitude towards Chaucer's poetry. His most definite remarks concerning Chaucer are to be found in his comments upon Dryden's *Fables,* as for example: "The Knight's Tale, whether we consider Chaucer's original poem, or the spirited and animated version of Dryden, is one of the best pieces of composition in our language";[4] "Of all Chaucer's multifarious powers, none is more wonderful than the

[1] Bletson and Richard Ganlesse.

[2] But see the dictum quoted by Scott in a somewhat over-emphatic way from Ellis's *Specimens of the Early English Poets,* to the effect that Chaucer's "peculiar ornaments of style, consisting in an affectation of splendour, and especially of latinity," were perhaps his special contribution to the improvement of English poetry. (*Edinburgh Review,* April, 1804.) Scott said of Dunbar, "This darling of the Scottish muses has been justly raised to a level with Chaucer by every judge of poetry to whom his obsolete language has not rendered him unintelligible." (*Memoir of Bannatyne,* p. 14.) After naming the various qualities in which Dunbar was Chaucer's rival, he pronounces the Scottish poet inferior in the use of pathos. The relative position here assigned to the two poets seems to be rather an exaltation of Dunbar than a degradation of Chaucer.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 408.

[4] *Dryden,* Vol. XI, p. 245.

humour with which he touched upon natural frailty, and the truth with which he describes the inward feelings of the human heart."[1] Yet he once called *Troilus and Criseyde* "a somewhat dull poem." *The Cock and the Fox,* on the other hand, he speaks of as "a poem which, in grave ironical narrative, liveliness of illustration, and happiness of humorous description, yields to none that ever was written."[3]

In estimating the importance of Scott's studies on any one period we have to think of them as part of a greater whole. The wide range of his investigations would evidently make it impossible to expect a complete treatment of all the subjects he might choose to discuss, and we have found, in fact, that his criticism of mediaeval literature led to systematic results in no other lines than those of the ballad and the romance. But these were large and important matters. Moreover, to all that he wrote in connection with the Middle Ages there attaches a special interest; for with that work he made his real start in literature; and it reflected the peculiarly delightful vein in his own nature which was constant from youth to age, and which gave to his poems and novels some of their most brilliant qualities.[4]

[1] *Dryden,* Vol. XI, p. 396.
[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. VI, p. 243.
[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. XI, p. 338.
[4] The discussion of popular superstitions given in the introduction to the *Minstrelsy* and in the Essay on Fairies, which is prefixed to the ballad of *Young Tamlane,* suggests comparison with the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* which Scott wrote in the year before he died. He collected a remarkable library in regard to superstition, and thought at various times of making a book on the subject, but the project was pushed aside for other matters until 1831. The *Letters* which he wrote then are full of pleasant anecdote and judicious comment, and though they lack the vigor of his earlier work they have remained fairly popular. An edition of Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth of Elves and Fairies,* published in 1815, has been attributed to Scott. (See below, the Bibliography of books edited by Scott.) Reviews of his which have not been mentioned in this chapter, but which naturally connect themselves with the subjects here discussed, are the following: *The Culloden Papers*—an account of the Highland clans, largely narrative (*Quarterly,* January, 1816); Ritson's *Annals of the Caledonians, Picts and Scots*—an article of more than forty pages, discussing the early history of Scotland and the historians who have written upon it (*Quarterly,* July, 1829); Tytler's *History of Scotland*—an article similar to that on Ritson's book (*Quarterly,* November, 1829);

THE DRAMA

Scott's fondness for the drama and his acquaintance with actors — His ideas about plot structure — His own dramatic experiments — His opinion of the theaters of his day — His knowledge of English dramatic literature — Familiarity with Elizabethan plays shown in his novels — His Essay on the Drama — Ancient drama — French drama — Dramatic unities — German drama — Elizabethan drama — Shakspere — Ben Jonson — Dryden and other Restoration dramatists — Morality of theater-going — Character of Scott's interest in the drama.

Like most of his characteristics, Scott's taste for the theater was exhibited in his childhood. We find him reverting, in a review written in 1826,[1] to his rapturous emotions on the occasion of seeing his first play; and in the private theatricals which he and his brothers and sister performed in the family dining-room he was always the manager. In 1810 he was active in helping to bring out in Edinburgh the *Family Legend* of his friend Joanna Baillie.[2] One of the actors on that occasion was Daniel Terry,[3] who became an intimate friend of Scott's. For Terry Scott wrote *The Doom of Devorgoil,* but the piece

Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials*—a long article, which begins with an extended digression on booksellers and collectors and on the Roxburghe and Bannatyne clubs (*Quarterly,* February, 1831); Sibbald's *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*—merely a series of notes on special points (*Edinburgh Review,* October, 1803); Southey's *Chronicle of the Cid* (*Quarterly,* February, 1809). For the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Scott wrote an essay on Chivalry, as well as the one on Romance to which reference has been made.

[1] Review of *Kelly's Reminiscences and the Life of Kemble, Quarterly Review,* June, 1826.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 97.

[3] Terry had been educated as an architect, and his knowledge and taste were of assistance to Scott in connection with the building and furnishing of Abbotsford. After 1812 he played chiefly in London. In 1816 his version of *Guy Mannering,* the first of his adaptations from Scott, was presented. Before this he had taken the part of Roderick Dhu in two dramatic versions of *The Lady of the Lake.* In 1819 he was the first David Deans in his adaptation of *The Heart of Midlothian.* Six years later he became manager of the Adelphi theater, in association with F. H. Yates. At this time Scott became Terry's security for £1280, a sum which he was afterward obliged to pay with the addition of £500 for which the credit of James Ballantyne was pledged. When financial embarrassment caused Terry to retire from the management his mental and physical powers gave way, and he died of paralysis in 1829. Terry admired Scott so much that he learned to imitate his facial expression, his speech and his handwriting.

was not found suitable for presentation. Several of the novels were more successfully dramatized by the same friend, so that we find the "Author" humorously complaining in the "Introductory Epistle" to *The Fortunes of Nigel,* "I believe my muse would be *Terry*fied into treading the stage even if I should write a sermon." Among Scott's friends were several other actors, particularly Mrs. Siddons and her brother John Kemble, and the comedian Charles Mathews. In Scott's review of *Kelly's Reminiscences and the Life of Kemble* we find recorded many of the discriminations he was fond of making in regard to the talents of particular actors.

In his childhood Scott felt well qualified to take the part of Richard III., for he considered that his limp "would do well enough to represent the hump."[1] After a similar fashion we find him commenting on the improbabilities of the tragedy of *Douglas:* "But the spectator should, and indeed must, make considerable allowances if he expects to receive pleasure from the drama. He must get his mind, according to Tony Lumpkin's phrase, into 'a concatenation accordingly,'[2] since he cannot reasonably expect that scenes of deep and complicated interest shall be placed before him, in close succession, without some force being put upon ordinary probability; and the question is not, how far you have sacrificed your judgment in order to accommodate the fiction, but rather, what is the degree of delight you have received in return."[3]

Scott disclaimed any special knowledge of stage-craft. "I know as little about the division of a drama as the spinster about the division of a battle, to use Iago's simile,"[4] he once wrote to a friend. Yet as a critic he had of course some general ideas about the making of plays, without having worked out any subtle theories on the subject. In criticising a play by Allan Cunningham, who had asked for his judgment on it,

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 94.

[2] The phrase, which was a favorite one of Scott's, is spoken not by Tony Lumpkin, but by one of his tavern companions. Scott's use of it is an indication of the way in which he was familiar with the drama. Very likely he never reread the play after his youth, but his strong memory doubtless retained a pretty definite impression of it.

[3] Review of the *Life and Works of John Home, Quarterly,* June, 1827.

[4] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 143.

he remarked first that the plot was ill-combined. "If the mind can be kept upon one unbroken course of interest, the effect even in perusal is more gratifying. I have always considered this as the great secret in dramatic poetry, and conceive it one of the most difficult exercises of the invention possible, to conduct a story through five acts, developing it gradually in every scene, so as to keep up the attention, yet never till the very conclusion permitting the nature of the catastrophe to become visible,—and all the while to accompany this by the necessary delineation of character and beauty of language."[1] And again he said to the same person, "I hope you will make another dramatic attempt; and in that case I would strongly recommend that you should previously make a model or skeleton of your incidents, dividing them regularly into scenes and acts, so as to insure the dependence of one circumstance upon another, and the simplicity and union of your whole story."[2] Here we find Scott giving advice which by his own admission he was not himself able to follow in the composition of fiction. "I never could lay down a plan, or having laid it down I never could adhere to it," he wrote in his journal.[3] And the "Author" in the introductory epistle to *Nigel* remarks, "It may pass for one good reason for not writing a play, that I cannot form a plot."

The few experiments that he made he did not seem to regard seriously at any time, though he was rather favorably impressed on rereading the *Doom of Devorgoil* after it had lain unused for several years.[4] Of *Halidon Hill* he said, "It is designed to illustrate military antiquities and the manners of chivalry. The drama (if it can be called one) is in no particular either designed or calculated for the stage."[5] He seems

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 427. It may be noted that this criticism does not show much dramatic insight.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, pp. 445–6.

[3] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 117; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 447.

[4] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 94; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 419.

[5] Advertisement to *Halidon Hill.* When the publisher Cadell closed a bargain with Scott in five minutes for *Halidon Hill,* giving him £1000, he wrote as follows to his partner: "My views were these: here is a commencement of a series of dramatic writings—let us begin by buying them out." (*Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, p. 217.)

to have been "often urged" to write plays, if one may trust Captain Clutterbuck's authority, and the effectiveness of the many poetical mottoes improvised by the Author of Waverley for the chapters of his novels, and subscribed "Old Play,"[1] was naturally used as an argument.[2] Scott's own judgment on the matter was expressed thus: "Nothing so easy when you are full of an author, as to write a few lines in his taste and style; the difficulty is to keep it up. Besides, the greatest success would be but a spiritless imitation, or, at best, what the Italians call a *centone* [*sic*] from Shakspeare."[3] When Elliston became manager of Drury Lane in 1819 he applied to Scott for plays, but without effect.[4] Scott seems never to have felt any concern over the fact that the dramatized versions of his novels were often very poor, but Hazlitt wished that he would "not leave it to others to mar what he has sketched so admirably as a ground-work," for he saw no good reason why the author of Waverley could not write "a first-rate tragedy as well as so many first-rate novels."[5]

Scott felt that to write for the stage in his day was a thankless and almost degrading occupation. "Avowedly I will never write for the stage; if I do, 'call me horse.'" he said in a letter to Terry.[6] Again in a letter to Southey: "I do not think the character of the audience in London is such that one could have the least pleasure in pleasing them. . . . On the whole, I would far rather write verses for mine honest friend Punch and his audience";[7] and to a would-be tragedian he said: "In the present day there is only one reason which seems to me adequate for the encountering the plague of trying to please a set of conceited performers and a very motley audience,—I mean the want of money."[8] This degraded condition of the London stage Scott thought to be a consequence of limiting the number of theaters. We can

[1] "That well-written, but very didactic 'Old Play'," as Adolphus calls it. (*Letters to Heber*, p. 55.)

[2] Introductory epistle to *Nigel*.

[3] *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 414.

[4] Fitzgerald's *New History of the English Stage*, Vol. II, p. 404.

[5] *Dramatic Essays*, Hazlitt's *Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 422.

[6] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 176.

[7] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 265.

[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 332.

hardly suppose, however, that he was pessimistic in regard to the written drama of his day, when he could say of Byron, "There is one who, to judge from the dramatic sketch he has given us in Manfred, must be considered as a match for Aeschylus, even in his sublimest moods of horror";[1] or when he could place Joanna Baillie in the same class with Shakspere.[2]

Scott probably did much reading in the drama in his early life. We know that by 1804 he had "long since" annotated his copy of Beaumont and Fletcher sufficiently so that he wished to offer it to Gifford, who, Scott erroneously understood, was about to edit their dramas.[3] The edition of Dryden, published in 1808, shows familiarity with Elizabethan as well as Restoration dramatists. He seems to have had first-hand knowledge of such men as Ford, Webster, Marston, Brome, Shirley, Chapman, and Dekker, whom he mentions as being "little known to the general readers of the present day, even by name."[4] But 1808 was the very year in which ap-

[1] *Essay on the Drama.*

[2] In 1808 he wrote to a friend: "We have Miss Baillie here at present, who is certainly the best dramatic writer whom Britain has produced since the days of Shakspeare and Massinger." (*Fam. Let.*, Vol. I, p. 99.) But Wilson also put Joanna Baillie next to Shakspere, and quite seriously. The article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* on Joanna Baillie says that when the first volume of *Plays on the Passions* was published anonymously in 1798, Walter Scott was at first suspected of being the author. But as Scott had done nothing to give him a literary reputation in 1798, the assertion is incredible. It seems to be based on the following very inexact statement in *Chambers's Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen.* (Vol. V, Art. *Joanna Baillie.*) "Rich though the period was in poetry, this work made a great impression, and a new edition of it was soon required. The writer was sought for among the most gifted personages of the day, and the illustrious Scott, with others then equally appreciated, was suspected as the author."

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 380.

[4] *Life of Dryden,* ch. I. In *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary,* the first two novels in which Scott habitually used mottoes to head his chapters, most of the selections are from plays. Eighteen plays of Shakspere are represented by twenty-nine quotations. Other mottoes are from *The Merry Devil of Edmonton,* from Jonson, from Fletcher (*The Little French Lawyer, Women Pleased, The Fair Maid of the Inn, The Beggar's Bush*), from Brome, Dekker, Middleton and Rowley, Cartwright, Otway, Southerne, *The Beggar's Opera,* Walpole's *Mysterious Mother, The Critic, Chrononhotonthologos,* Joanna Baillie. For the latter part of *The Antiquary* many

peared Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* and Coleridge's first course of lectures on Shakspere. The old dramatists were beginning to come to their own, through the sympathetic appreciation of the Romantic critics. Scott never refers, however, to the work of Lamb, Coleridge, or Hazlitt[1] in this field, and we conclude that his researches in dramatic literature were the recreation of a man who realized that his business lay in another direction. But in preparing the *Dryden,* he doubtless read more widely in Restoration drama than he would otherwise have done. Throughout his life he continued to read plays at intervals, as we know from occasional references in the *Journal;* but after the *Dryden* appeared we can point to no time in his career when such reading was his especial occupation. His familiarity with Elizabethan drama he showed even more emphatically than by serious critical writings on the subject, in his fragments from mythical "Old Plays,"[2] in his frequent references to single plays, and in the substance of some of the novels, particularly *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *Woodstock,* which make use of settings, situations, and characterizations suggested by the drama.[3] Mr. Lang says of *The Fortunes of Nigel,* "The scenes in Alsatia are a distinct gain to literature, a pearl rescued from the unread mass of Shadwell."[4]

of the mottoes were composed by Scott himself: *Kenilworth* presents a similar list, with some variations: Jonson's *Masque of Owls* was used, more than one play by Beaumont and Fletcher, Waldron's *Virgin Queen, Wallenstein,* and *Douglas.* In *St. Roman's Well* there is a larger proportion of non-dramatic mottoes, as in most of the later novels, but we find represented nine of Shakspere's plays and one of Beaumont and Fletcher's. *The Legend of Montrose* (chapter XIV) has a motto from Suckling's *Brennoralt.* In *Anne of Geierstein* ten of Shakspere's plays were drawn upon, and *Manfred* was twice used. Scott made his chapters much longer in these later novels, and used fewer mottoes, but the evidence of the selections would seem to indicate that he had lost something of his early familiarity with dramatic literature.

[1] Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* appeared in 1817; his *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Queen Elizabeth* in 1821.

[2] Scott first began to fabricate occasional mottoes for his chapters during the composition of *The Antiquary* in 1816.

[3] Saintsbury in *Macmillan's Magazine,* lxx: 323. Scott's style in many passages is strongly colored by the influence of Shakspere.

[4] Introduction by Lang to *The Fortunes of Nigel.*

His serious critical writings on the subject comprise little else than his *Essay on the Drama,* which appeared in the supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica,* published in 1819, and the discussions given in connection with Dryden's plays.[1] Although the Essay was written ten years later than the *Dryden,* we have no reason to think that Scott changed his

[1] It is possible that among the various jobs of editing undertaken by Scott with a view to keeping the Ballantyne types busy, were certain collections of dramas. *Ancient British Drama,* in three volumes, and *Modern British Drama,* in five volumes, published in 1810 and 1811, are sometimes attributed to Scott in library catalogues, but on what authority it seems impossible to discover. There is almost no commentary in the *Ancient British Drama,* but the *Modern British Drama* contains three brief introductions which I believe were written by Scott. They show a striking likeness to some parts of the *Essay on the Drama* written several years later, and it is not probable that Scott took his criticism ready-made from another author. In the preface to the *Ancient British Drama* we find this statement: "The present publication is intended to form, with *The British Drama* and *Shakspeare,* a complete and uniform collection in ten volumes of the best English plays." The Shakspeare here referred to is doubtless that of which Constable the publisher afterwards spoke in his correspondence with Scott as "Ballantyne's Shakespeare," and Scott had no hand in the editorship. (*Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, p. 244.)

It is true, however, as R. S. Mackenzie says in his *Life of Scott,* that Scott "had not only meditated, but partly executed an edition of Shakespeare." The work was suggested by Constable in 1822, was begun in 1823 or 1824, and three volumes of the proposed ten were printed by the time of Constable's financial crash in the beginning of 1826. The project was sometime afterwards abandoned, and the printed sheets, which apparently were not bound up, disappeared from view. The first volume was to be a life of Shakspere by Scott, and this was probably not begun at all. Of the commentary in the other volumes, Scott was to have the oversight but Lockhart was to do most of the work. It was not designed that the critical apparatus should to any great degree represent original ideas furnished by Lockhart or Scott, but the book was to be "a sensible Shakespeare, in which the useful and readable notes should be condensed and separated from the trash." (See the discussion of the matter in letters between Scott and his publisher given in the third volume of *Constable's Correspondence.* See also Lang's *Life of Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 409, and Vol. II, p. 13, and Mackenzie's *Life of Scott,* pp. 475–6.) The Boston Public Library contains three volumes which are thought to be a unique copy of so much of the Scott-Lockhart Shakspere as was printed. (See below, the Bibliography of books edited by Scott.)

Scott's notes on Beaumont and Fletcher, which he had wished in 1804 to offer to Gifford, were actually used by Weber in his *Beaumont and Fletcher,* published about 1810, an edition which was characterized by Scott as "too carelessly done to be reputable." (*Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 472.)

views or added greatly to his knowledge in the interval, and using these two sources we may discuss his account of the drama in general without regard to the particular date at which his opinions were expressed.

His exposition in the *Essay on the Drama* rested on the basis furnished by a historical study of the stage. He did not, of course, pretend to have formed his own conclusions on all points, and we find him quoting from various authorities, sometimes naming them and sometimes only indicating, perhaps, that he was "abridging from the best antiquaries." This, however, was chiefly in connection with the ancient drama. As I have already remarked, we do not find him referring to recent studies on the English drama. And though Scott had forgotten all his Greek we observe that he is bold enough to disagree with "the ingenious Schlegel" in regard to the comparative value of the Greek New Comedy. In his treatment of the ancient drama the main point for note is the success with which he gives a broad and connected view of the subject. His account of the drama in France needs correction in certain respects,[1] but it seems to indicate some first-hand knowledge and very definite opinions. He quotes Molière frequently throughout his writings, and always speaks of him with admiration; but with no other French dramatist does he seem to have been familiar to such a degree. Judging French tragic poets too much from the Shaksperian point of view, he was not prepared to do them justice.[2] On the dramatic unities, of which he remarked, "Aristotle says so little and his commentators and followers talk so much," Scott wrote, here and elsewhere, with decision and vivacity. The unities of time and place he calls "fopperies," though time and place, he admits, are not to be lightly changed.[3] He connects the whole discussion with the study of theatrical conditions, and never bows

[1] He seems to have connected heroic plays too closely with "the romances of Calprenède and Scudéri." See his introduction to *The Indian Emperor, Dryden,* Vol. II, pp. 317–20; also Vol. I, p. 56, and Vol. VI, p. 125. On his opinion in regard to the relation between novels and plays see below, pp. 75–6.

[2] See his comment on Corneille's *Oedipe, Dryden,* Vol. VI, p. 125, and Mr. Saintsbury's note.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 446.

down to authority as such. He says, "Surely it is of less consequence merely to ascertain what was the practice of the ancients, than to consider how far such practice is founded upon truth, good taste, and general effect"; and again, "Aristotle would probably have formulated different rules if he had written in our time." And though he adopted and applied to the drama the Horatian dictum that the end of poetry is to instruct and delight, it was not because Horace and a long line of critics had said it, but because he thought it was true. Doubtless his phrase would have been different if he had not taken what was lying nearest, but his habit was never carefully to avoid the common phrase. His general opinion of French drama was decidedly unfavorable, and he thought it was doubtful whether their plays would ever be any nearer to nature. "That nation," he observes calmly, "is so unfortunate as to have no poetical language."

His remarks on German drama are general in character, though we know that in his early days he was much interested in translating contemporary German plays. His version of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* was the most important of these translations. A letter of Scott's contains the following reference to this play:[1] "The publication of Goetz was a great era . . . in German literature, and served completely to free them from the French follies of unities and decencies of the scene, and gave an impulse to their dramas which was unique of its kind. Since that, they have been often stark mad but never, I think, stupid. They either divert you by taking the most brilliant leaps through the hoop, or else by tumbling into the custard, as the newspapers averred the Champion did at the Lord Mayor's dinner."

When he is on English ground we can best trace Scott's individual opinions, yet even here he reflects some of the limitations of the less enlightened scholarship of his time, especially in connection with early Elizabethan writers. He passes from *Ferrex and Porrex*[2] and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* di-

[1] Hutchinson's *Letters of Scott*, p. 224.

[2] That Scott admired Sackville greatly is evident from more than one comment. Of *Ferrex and Porrex* he says, "In Sackville's part of the play,

rectly to Shakspere, and quite omits Marlowe and the other immediate predecessors. He was not ignorant of their existence, for against a statement of Dryden's that Shakspere was the first to use blank verse we find in Scott's edition the note,—"This is a mistake. Marlowe and several other dramatic authors used blank verse before the days of Shakespeare";[1] and one of his youthful notebooks contains this comment on *Faustus:* "A very remarkable thing. Grand subject—end grand."[2] In 1831 Scott intended to write an article for the *Quarterly Review* on Peele, Greene, and Webster, and in asking Alexander Dyce to have Webster's works sent to him he said, "Marlowe and others I have,—and some acquaintance with the subject, though not much."[3] Webster he considered "one of the best of our ancient dramatists." The proposed article was never written, because of Scott's final illness.

In spite of his statement that "the English stage might be considered equally without rule and without model when Shakspeare arose," Scott did not seem inclined to leave the great man altogether unaccounted for, as some critics have preferred to do, for he says, "The effect of the genius of an individual upon the taste of a nation is mighty; but that genius in its turn is formed according to the opinions prevalent at the period when it comes into existence." These opinions, however, Scott assigns very vaguely to the influence of "a nameless crowd of obscure writers," and thinks it fortunate that Shakspere was unacquainted with classical rules. The critic had evidently made no attempt to define the influence of particular writers upon Shakspere. His criticism is at some points purely conventional, as for instance when he calls the poet "that powerful magician, whose art could fascinate us even by means of deformity itself"; but on the whole Scott seems to write about Shakspere in a very reasonable and discriminating way.

which comprehends the two last acts, there is some poetry worthy of the author of the sublime Induction to the Mirror of Magistrates." (*Dryden*, Vol. II, p. 135.) Elsewhere Scott calls Sackville "a beautiful poet." (*Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 277. *Secret History of the Court of James I.*, Vol. I, p. 278, note.)

[1] *Dryden*, Vol. II, p. 136.

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 229. See also Vol. III, p. 223.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 322.

He has a good deal to say of Ben Jonson, in other places as well as in this Essay on the Drama.[1] He was evidently well acquainted with that poet, and admired him without liking him. Somewhere he calls him "the dry and dogged Jonson,"[2] and again he speaks of his genius in very high terms. The contrast between Shakspere and Jonson moved him even to epigram:[3] "In reading Shakespeare we often meet passages so congenial to our nature and feelings that, beautiful as they are, we can hardly help wondering they did not occur to ourselves; in studying Jonson, we have often to marvel how his conceptions could have occurred to any human being." It was characteristic of Scott to note the fact that Shakspere wrote rapidly, Jonson slowly, for he was fond of getting support for his theory that rapid writing is the better.

As early as 1804 Scott referred to *The Changeling* as "an old play which contains some passages horribly striking,"[4] and in so doing voiced, as Mr. Swinburne says, "the first word of modern tribute to the tragic genius of Thomas Middleton."[5] Scott also praised Massinger highly, especially for his strength in characterization, and once called him "the most gentlemanlike of all the old English dramatists."[6] He discussed Beaumont and Fletcher sympathetically, for he knew them well and frequently quoted from them. He named Shirley, Ford, Webster, and Dekker in a group, and spoke of the singular profusion of talents devoted in this period to the writing of plays, an observation which is made more explicitly later in the *Journal*, when he has just been reading an old play which, he says, "worthless in the extreme, is, like many of the plays in the beginning of the seventeenth century, written to a good tune. The dramatic poets of that time seem to have possessed as joint-stock a highly poetical and abstract tone of language, so that the worst of them often remind you of the very best."[7]

[1] See, for example, *Hawthornden*, in *Provincial Antiquities*.
[2] *Dryden*, Vol. XV, p. 337. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 10.
[4] Note on *Sir Tristrem*, Fytte II., stanza 56.
[5] See Middleton's Plays in the Mermaid edition: Introduction, Vol. I, pp. viii–ix.
[6] Ticknor, in Allibone's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 1968.
[7] *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 234; *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 23.

This circumstance he accounts for by a reference to the audiences, and this in turn he seems to ascribe partly to the great number of theaters then open in London. He dwells so much on the evils of limiting the number of play-houses to two or three, that we may fairly consider it one of his hobbies, and it is possible that he had some slight influence toward increasing that public opposition to the theatrical monopoly which finally, in 1843, resulted in the nullification of the patents.

Scott's discussion of Restoration drama is admirably vigorous and clear. He probably simplified the matter too much at some points, indeed, as for example in over-estimating the influence exerted upon the stage by Charles II. and his French tastes, and in tracing the origin of the French drama to romances. But in general his facts are right and his deductions fair. Mr. Saintsbury has accused him of depreciating Dryden's plays, especially the comedies, out of disgust at their indecency; yet in judging the period as a whole he seems to discriminate sufficiently between indelicacy and dulness. "The talents of Otway," he says, "in his scenes of passionate affection rival, at least, and sometimes excel those of Shakspeare." Again: "The comedies of Congreve contain probably more wit than was ever before embodied upon the stage; each word was a jest, and yet so characteristic that the repartee of the servant is distinguished from that of the master; the jest of the coxcomb from that of the humorist or fine gentleman of the piece." Lesser writers of the time are also sympathetically characterized,—Shadwell, for instance, whom he thought to be commonly underestimated.[1] The heroic play Scott discussed vivaciously in more than one connection, for, as we should expect, his sense of humor found its absurdities tempting.[2] On the rant in the *Conquest of Granada* he remarked, "Dryden's apology for these extravagances seems to be that Almanzor is in a passion. But although talking nonsense is a

[1] See Scott's article on Molière, *Foreign Quarterly Review,* February, 1828.

[2] *Essay on Drama; Dryden,* Vol. I, p. 101 ff., Vol. II, pp. 317–20, Vol. IV, p. 4.

common effect of passion, it seems hardly one of those consequences adapted to show forth the character of a hero in theatrical representation."[1] Scott's opinion of the form of these plays appears in the following comment: "We doubt if, with his utmost efforts, [Molière] could have been absolutely dull, without the assistance of a pastoral subject and heroic measure."[2] Concerning the indecency of the literature of the period Scott wrote emphatically. He was much troubled by the problem of whether to publish Dryden's works without any cutting, and came near taking Ellis's advice to omit some portions, but he finally adhered to his original determination: "In making an edition of a man of genius's works for libraries and collections . . . I must give my author as I find him, and will not tear out the page, even to get rid of the blot, little as I like it."[3]

The question of the morality of theater-going was one Scott felt obliged to discuss when he was writing upon the drama. He found its vindication, characteristically, in a universal human trait,—the impulse toward mimicry and impersonation, —and in the good results that may be supposed to attend it. In naming these he lays what seems like undue stress on the teaching of history by the drama, in language that might quite as well be applied to historical novels. His argument on the literary side also is stated in a somewhat too sweeping way:— "Had there been no drama, Shakespeare would, in all likelihood, have been but the author of *Venus and Adonis* and of a few sonnets forgotten among the numerous works of the Elizabethan age, and Otway had been only the compiler of fantastic odes."[4] A final plea, in favor of the stage as a democratic agency—though this of course is not Scott's phrasing—seems slightly unusual for him, although not essentially out of character. "The entertainment," he says, "which is the subject of general enjoyment, is of a nature which tends to soften, if not to level, the distinction of ranks."[5] In another mood he

[1] *Dryden*, Vol. IV, p. 4.
[2] Article on Molière, *Foreign Quarterly Review*, February, 1828.
[3] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 431.
[4] Review of *Kelly's Reminiscences and the Life of Kemble, Quarterly Review*, June, 1826.
[5] *Ibid.*

admitted the greater likelihood that immoral plays would injure the public character than that moral plays would elevate it.[1]

It is sufficiently apparent to any student of Scott's work that he was personally very fond of the drama. Many of the literary references and allusions which appear in great abundance throughout his writings are from plays, and show, as we have seen, a wide acquaintance with English dramatic writers, from Shakspere to such comparatively little-known playwrights as Suckling and Cowley. In the *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther on the Currency,* for example, Scott's unusual range of reading reveals itself even in connection with a subject remote from his ordinary field, and here as elsewhere he shows himself prone to quote from the drama.[2] But Scott was interested in plays for what he found in them of characters and manners, of witty and sententious speech, of situations and incidents, and only secondarily in the technical aspects of the drama. Reading his novels we could guess that he would care more for the concrete elements of a play than for the orderly march of events through the various stages of a formally proper construction. In this respect he differs from Coleridge; but indeed the two men may be contrasted at almost every point. In summing up this part of Scott's criticism we must remember also that it was chiefly incidental. Perhaps whatever qualities it exhibits are on this account particularly characteristic: at any rate his opinions on the drama were the reaction of an unusually capable mind upon a department of literature in which his reading was all the more fruitful because it followed the lines of a natural inclination.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—*Dryden*

Scott's preparations for his edition of Dryden — Wide Scope of the work — Scott's estimation of Dryden — Grounds for putting Dryden above Chaucer and Spenser — Admirable style of the biography — Comments by Scott on other seventeenth century writers.

The edition of *Dryden's Complete Works* deserves further notice, especially since only eight of the eighteen volumes are

[1] *Dryden,* Vol. VI, p. 128.

[2] In *Provincial Antiquities* (Borthwick Castle), Scott cites parallels from *Sir John Oldcastle, The Pinner of Wakefield,* and one of Nash's pamphlets, for a curious incident in Scottish history.

occupied with the plays, and these have less commentary than other parts of the works. In 1805 Scott wrote to his friend, George Ellis, "My critical notes will not be very numerous, but I hope to illustrate the political poems, as *Absalom and Achitophel,* the *Hind and Panther,* etc., with some curious annotations. I have already made a complete search among some hundred pamphlets of that pamphlet-writing age, and with considerable success, as I have found several which throw light on my author."[1] He added that another edition of Dryden was proposed, and Ellis wrote in answer, "With regard to your competitors, I feel perfectly at my ease, because I am convinced that though you should generously furnish them with all the materials, they would not know how to use them; *non cuivis hominum contingit* to write critical notes that anyone will read."[2]

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 431. This search among seventeenth century pamphlets may have suggested to Scott the need of a new edition of *Somers' Tracts.* Apparently he arranged with the publishers in 1807 to undertake this task, but the first volume did not appear till 1809. (*Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 10, and see below, pp. 89–90, for an account of Scott's edition of the *Tracts.*) Some of his materials for the *Dryden* were taken from this collection, but more from the Luttrell collection, to which he refers in the Advertisement.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 433. Scott's *Dryden* appeared in 1808, and with some slight changes in 1821; as reëdited by Mr. Saintsbury it was published in 1882–1893. It was the first complete and uniform edition of Dryden's works, and it remains the only one. The dramatic works had appeared in folio in 1701. They were edited by Congreve in 1717, and Scott used Congreve's text. The non-dramatic poems were also published in 1701 in folio. They appeared in more convenient forms in 1741, 1743, and 1760, but of these editions only the last was reasonably complete. In 1800 the Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works were edited by Malone, who added a Life of Dryden which has furnished a large part of the material used by biographers since his time. This biography was badly written, but with Johnson's brilliant essay it was the only Life of Dryden before Scott's that was worth considering. An edition of Dryden's poems, with notes by Joseph Warton and others, appeared in 1811, but seems to have been prepared before Scott's edition was published. The text of this is very incorrect. Since then the non-dramatic poems have been published several times. Mr. Christie said in his preface to the Globe edition: "Sir Walter Scott's is the last important edition of Dryden, as it is indeed still the only general collection of his works; and it is to be regretted that that distinguished man did not give as much pains to the purification of Dryden's text as he did to his excellent biography and to the notes which enrich the edition."

When Scott's Dryden was reëdited and reissued in 1882–93 by Professor Saintsbury, the new editor said: "It certainly deserves the credit of being one of the best-edited books on a great scale in English, save in one particular,—the revision of the text."[1] The elaborate historical notes are left untouched, as being "in general thoroughly trustworthy,"[2] though the editor considers them somewhat excessive, especially as sometimes containing illustrative material from perfectly worthless contemporaries. On the other hand, the "explanation of word and phrase is a little defective."[3]

The most notable quality of the *Life of Dryden* which composes the first of the eighteen volumes is its breadth of scope. Scott's aim may best be given in his own words in the Advertisement: "The general critical view of Dryden's works being sketched by Johnson with unequalled felicity, and the incidents of his life accurately discussed and ascertained by Malone, something seemed to remain for him who should consider these literary productions in their succession, as actuated by, and operating upon, the taste of an age where they had so predominant influence; and who might, at the same time, connect the life of Dryden with the history of his publications, without losing sight of the fate and character of the individual."[4]

Errors of judgment appear in places; sometimes they are due to the imperfect scholarship of the time; sometimes they arise from prejudices of Scott's own. In the very first chapter we find him condemning Lyly and all writers of "conceited" language—particularly of course the Metaphysicals—with a thoroughness that a truly catholic critic ought probably to avoid. Scott had a constitutional dislike for a labored style, and at the same time a fondness for the direct and straightforward way of looking at things. So, though he was open

[1] Editor's Preface.

[2] *Dryden*, Vol. IX, p. 226.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p. 2.

[4] In this connection Scott's review of Todd's edition of Spenser is interesting. He takes exception to the lack of an appearance of continuity in the biography, caused by the long quotations included in the body of the narrative; and censures the editor for not having used the history of Italian poetry in elucidating Spenser's work. (*Edinburgh Review*, October, 1805.)

to the emotional appeal of a poem like *Christabel,* he took no pleasure in the devious processes by which the cold intellect has sometimes tried to give fresh interest to familiar words and ideas. They quite prevented him from seeing the passion in the work of Donne, for example, and he considered all metaphysical poets, in so far as they showed the traits of their class, to be without poetical feeling.

Scott placed Dryden after Shakspere and Milton as third in the list of English writers. I think he would even have been willing to say that Dryden was the third as a poet. For greatly as he admired Chaucer, Scott did not feel Chaucer's full power, and indeed it was only beginning to be possible to read Chaucer with any appreciation of his metrical excellence. Spenser, of whom he once wrote: "No author, perhaps, ever possessed and combined in so brilliant a degree the requisite qualities of a poet,"[1] was more of a favorite with Scott than Chaucer. But at another time he spoke of Drayton as possessing perhaps equal powers of poetry,[2] and he seems to have felt that Spenser becomes tedious through the continued use of his difficult stanza and even more because of the "languor of a continued allegory."[3] In comparing his judgments on Spenser and Dryden we may conclude that the critic found more in the later poet of that solid intellectual basis which he emphasizes in characterizing him. "This power of ratiocination," says Scott, "of investigating, discovering, and appreciating that which is really excellent, if accompanied with the necessary command of fanciful illustration and elegant expression, is the most interesting quality which can be possessed by a poet."[4] Again he lays emphasis on Dryden's versatility,—greater, he says, than that of Shakspere and Milton. In *Old Mortality* Dryden is referred to as "the great High-priest of all the Nine." Scott would have called this another point of his superiority over Spenser, if he had made the comparison.

Yet he saw Dryden's deficiencies. "It was a consequence of his mental acuteness that his dramatic personages often philoso-

[1] Review of Todd's *Spenser.*
[2] *Dryden,* Vol. I, p. 6.
[3] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 229; and *Dryden,* Vol. I, p. 6.
[4] *Dryden,* Vol. I, pp. 402–3.

phized and reasoned when they ought only to have felt,"[1] Scott remarks, and he frequently deplores Dryden's failure "in expressing the milder and more tender passions."[2] Of Dryden's great gift of style, Scott speaks in the highest terms. "With this power," he says, "Dryden's poetry was gifted in a degree surpassing in modulated harmony that of all who had preceded him, and inferior to none that has since written English verse [*sic*]. He first showed"—and here we see Scott's eighteenth-century affinities—"that the English language was capable of uniting smoothness and strength."[3]

Such criticism as Scott gives on specific parts of Dryden's work is clear-cut, fair for the most part, and has the sanity and reasonableness which are the most noticeable qualities of his criticism in general. It would be easier to find illustrations of shrewdness than of subtlety among his notes, but his discriminations are often effective and satisfying. His discussion, for example, of prologues and epilogues considered in relation to the theatrical conditions which determined their character is admirable.[4] A note on "the cant of supposing that the *Iliad* contained an obvious and intentional moral"[5] is also full of sense and vigor, but these qualities are so thoroughly diffused through the work that there is no need of particularizing. His praise of *Alexander's Feast* may be referred to, however, as showing his characteristic delight in objective poetry.[6] As a lyric poet, he says, Dryden "must be allowed to have no equal."[7]

[1] *Dryden*, Vol. I, p. 403.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 404. Mr. Saintsbury thinks that Scott's prefatory introductions to the plays are often "both meagre and depreciatory"; also that Scott's judgment on Dryden's letters is rather harsh, for him, and that after he had begun to write novels he would not have been so impatient of remarks on "turkeys, marrow-puddings, and bacon."

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 405.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 307 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. XIV, pp. 136 and 146.

[6] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 405.

[7] In order to give a more specific view of Scott's methods, two or three of the introductions to well-known poems may be briefly analysed. The introduction to *Absalom and Achitophel* occupies 11½ pages, of which about 2½ are given to quotation from a tract which Scott thought furnished the argument to Dryden, and which was unnoticed by any former commentator. Scott's remarks follow this outline: Position of the poem in literature, and history of its composition; origin of the particular allegory as applied to modern politics; a parallel use of the allegory (with a quotation from *Somers' Tracts* in illustrations); aptness of the allegory;

The peculiarly congenial qualities of the subject may have had something to do with the fact that the style in which the *Life of Dryden* is written is noticeably better than that of Scott's ordinary work. It is marked with a care and accuracy that were not, unfortunately, habitual to him. Perhaps it was an advantage that when he wrote the book he had not yet become altogether familiar with his own facility; certainly the substance and the manner of treatment unite in making this the most important of his critical biographies.

Various references indicate that Scott was acquainted in at least a general way with English writers throughout the whole of Dryden's century. He speaks of the poems of Phineas Fletcher as containing "many passages fully equal to Spenser";[1] he says that Cowley "is now . . . undeservedly forgotten";[2] he calls *Hudibras* "the most witty poem that ever was written,"[3] but says, "the perpetual scintillation of Butler's wit is too dazzling to be delightful";[4] he talks of Waller and quotes from him;[5] he refers to the charming quality of Isaac Walton's

merits of the satire—treatment of Monmouth and other main characters; changes in the second edition to mitigate the satire; characterization of the poem as having few flights of imagination but much correctness of taste as well as fire and spirit; other objections by Johnson refuted; success of the poem; history of the first publication and of the replies and congratulatory poems; editions, and Latin versions. The notes on this poem are historical and very full, but the introduction contains as much literary as historical comment. *Religio Laici* is prefaced by 8 pages of introduction, in which are discussed the motive of the writing, the argument, the title, the purpose of the poem, and its reputation. Dryden's style in didactic poetry is compared with Cowper's, to the disadvantage of the later poet. The introduction to *The Hind and the Panther* is 20 pages long, and discusses the history of the period as well as the argument of the poem, its style, the subject of fables in general, and the effects the poem produced. The notes on this poem are copious. As he discussed the *Fables* in the *Life of Dryden,* Scott gave them no general introduction, and for each poem he wrote only a slight preface, telling something of the source and pointing out special beauties. His notes vary greatly in abundance. Those on *Palamon and Arcite, e. g.,* are brief, explaining terms of chivalry and heraldry, but not giving literary or linguistic comment.

[1] *Dryden,* Vol. XIII, p. 324.

[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. XII, p. 20.

[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. X, p. 213.

[4] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 411.

[5] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 98. See also *St. Ronan's Well,* Vol. I, p. 105, and various mottoes in the novels. The edition of the novels used for reference is that published in Edinburgh (1867) in 48 volumes.

work;[1] and he adopts Samuel Pepys as a familiar acquaintance.[2] These references occur mostly in the *Dryden* or in the novels, and we may conclude that the work for the *Dryden* gathered up and strengthened all Scott's acquaintance with the literature of the seventeenth century, from Shakspere and Milton down to writers of altogether minor importance; and gave him material for many of the allusions that appear in his later work. It is probably true that there are more quotations from Dryden in Scott's books than from any other one author,[3] though lines from Shakspere occurred more often in his conversation and familiar letters.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Swift

The preparation of *Swift's Complete Works*—Comparison of the *Dryden* and the *Swift*—The bibliographical problem presented by Swift's works—Inaccuracies in the biography—Scott's success in portraying a perplexing temperament—Judicious quality of his literary criticism.

As soon as the *Dryden* was completed Scott was offered twice as much money as he had received for that work, for a similar edition of Swift.[4] He readily undertook the task, and in the midst of many other editorial engagements set to work upon it. The preparation of the book extended over the six years during which Scott ran the greater part of his poetical career. On its appearance one of his friends expressed the

[1] *Dryden,* Vol. X, p. 26.

[2] For example see *Anne of Geierstein,* Vol. II, p. 307.

[3] *Letters to Heber,* p. 292.

[4] The price offered for the *Swift* was £1500. This must have been a rather rash speculation on the publisher's part, as there had been several editions of Swift's works published. The first appeared in twelve volumes in 1755, edited by Hawkesworth. Deane Swift, Hawkesworth, and others, added thirteen more volumes in the course of the next twenty-five years, and when the whole was completed it was reissued in three different sizes. In 1785 an edition in seventeen volumes was published, edited by Thomas Sheridan. In 1801 the edition by Nichols was published, and it reappeared in 1804 and in 1808. Hawkesworth and Thomas Sheridan supplied biographies which Leslie Stephen characterized by saying that Hawkesworth's gave no new material and that Sheridan's was "pompous and dull." (Preface to Leslie Stephen's *Life of Swift.*)

feeling which every student of Scott must have had in regard to the large editorial labors that he undertook, in saying, "I am delighted and surprised; for how a person of your turn could wade through, and so accurately analyze what you have done (namely, all the dull things calculated to illustrate your author), seems almost impossible, and a prodigy in the history of the human mind." The work was first published in 1814. Ten years later it was revised and reissued; and Scott's *Swift* has, like his *Dryden,* been the standard edition of that author ever since.

In each case Scott had to deal with an important and varied body of literature in the two fields of poetry and prose, though the proportions were different; and in each case he had occasion for illustrative historical annotations of the kind that he wrote with unrivalled facility. He was master of the political intrigues of Queen Anne's reign no less completely than of the circumstances which gave rise to *Absalom and Achitophel,* and the fact that his notes are less voluminous in the *Swift* is probably to be accounted for by the comparative absence of quaintness in the literary and social fashions of the eighteenth century.

The peculiar conditions under which Swift's writings had appeared, and his remarkable indifference to literary fame, gave the editor opportunity to look for material which had not before been included in his works. The diligent search of Scott and his various correspondents enabled him to add about thirty poems, between sixty and seventy letters from Swift, and about sixteen other small pieces. The most noteworthy item among these additions was the correspondence between Swift and Miss Vanhomrigh, of which only a very small part had previously been made public.[2]

Scott's notes seem to indicate that most of the necessary searching through newspapers and obscure pamphlets for forgotten work of Swift was performed by "obliging correspondents," and that the editor himself had only to pass judgment on what was brought to his attention. This impression may

[1] *Correspondence of C. K. Sharpe,* Vol. II, p. 178.

[2] This correspondence consisted of 28 letters from Swift, and 16 from "Vanessa."

arise largely from his cordiality in expressing indebtedness to his helpers, but it is certain that his position as a popular poet gave Scott the assistance of many people who would not have been enlisted in the work by an ordinary editor. But Scott had the difficult task of deciding whether the unauthenticated pieces were to be assigned to Swift. The bibliography of Swift is still so uncertain that it is impossible to say how many of the small pamphlets in verse and prose added in this edition are really his work.[1] Scott had good reason for his additions in most cases, though sometimes, as he was aware, the Dean had merely revised the work of other people. The editor was occasionally over-credulous in attributing pieces to Swift, but he was perhaps oftener too generous in giving room to things which he knew had very little claim to be considered Swift's work. When he was in doubt he chose to err on the safe side, according to the principles set forth in the following note on the *Letter from Dr. Tripe to Nestor Ironside:* "The piece contains a satirical description of Steele's person, and should the editor be mistaken in conjecturing that Swift contributed to compose it, may nevertheless, at this distance of time, merit preservation as a literary curiosity."[2] The ample space afforded by the

[1] A comparison of the index with the bibliography in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and with Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole's *Notes for a Bibliography of Swift* (*Bibliographer,* vi: 160–71) shows that Scott was usually right in his judgment on the main articles. But since Mr. Lane-Poole ends his list thus: "And numerous short poems, trifles, characters and short pieces," it is evident that one cannot carry the investigation far without undertaking to make a complete bibliography of Swift. Mr. Temple Scott says, in the Advertisement of his edition of Swift's Prose Works, begun in 1897, that since Sir Walter's edition of 1824 "there has been no serious attempt to grapple with the difficulties which then prevented and which still beset the attainment of a trustworthy and substantially complete text."

[2] *Swift,* Vol. IV, p. 280. Two more of Scott's comments may be given, further to illustrate his method. "This piece [William Crowe's Address to her Majesty, *Swift,* Vol. XII, p. 265] and those which follow, were first extracted by the learned Dr. Barrett, of Trinity College, Dublin, from the Lanesborough and other manuscripts. I have retained them from internal evidence, as I have discarded some articles upon the same score." "The following poems [poems given as "ascribed to Swift," Vol. X, p. 434] are extracted from the manuscript of Lord Lanesborough, called the Whimsical Medley. They are here inserted in deference to the opinion of a most obliging correspondent, who thinks they are juvenile attempts of Swift. I own I cannot discover much internal evidence in support of the supposition."

nineteen volumes of the book gives room to Arbuthnot's *History of John Bull*—because it was "usually published in Swift's works,"—to the verses addressed to the Dean and those written in memory of him, as well as to the prose and verse miscellanies of Pope and Swift, and the miscellanies and *jeux d'esprit* of Swift and Sheridan. Swift's correspondence fills the last four and a half volumes.

The biography, which occupies the first volume, is admirable in tone, but the facts Scott gives are less to be relied upon than the inferences and conclusions he derives from them. He corresponded with persons who were in a position to know about Swift from his friends and acquaintances, and probably he trusted too much to these "original sources." We find, as perhaps the most noteworthy instance, that the marriage to Stella is stated as an ascertained fact, on authority that is not now considered convincing. Later biographers of Swift,—Sir Henry Craik, Leslie Stephen, Mr. Churton Collins,—have borne witness to the human interest of Scott's biography, and its pre-eminence, in spite of inaccuracies, among all the Lives of Swift that have been written. But Mr. Churton Collins thinks Scott did not present a really clear view of Swift's mysterious character, and Craik says he took only the conventional attitude towards Swift's politics, misanthropy, and religion. The charge indicates Scott's weakness, and perhaps also much of his strength, as a biographer and critic, for he had no prejudice against the conventional as such, and was never anxious to exhibit special "insight" of any kind. Yet I think his portrayal of Swift has seemed to most readers a clear presentation of a real and comprehensible character.[1]

[1] Colonel Parnell, writing in the *English Historical Review* on "Dean Swift and the Memoirs of Captain Carleton," has spoken of the biography as "this most partial, verbose, and inaccurate account of the dean's life and writings." He says also that in editing *Carleton's Memoirs* Scott adopted, without investigation and in the face of evidence, Johnson's opinion that the memoirs were genuine; that Scott was mistaken about the date of the first edition and misquoted the title page; and that his "glowing account" of Lord Peterborough, in the introduction, was amplified (without acknowledgment) from a panegyric by Dr. Birch in "Houbraken's Heads." (*English Historical Review*, January, 1891; vi: 97. For a further reference to the article see below, p. 144.)

Scott's remark when he undertook the work, that Swift was one of his early favorites,[1] seems surprising when one remembers how his genial nature recoiled from misanthropy and cynicism; but his treatment of the Dean was so sympathetic that Jeffrey thought him decidedly too lenient, and was moved to express righteous indignation in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review.*[2] The rebuke was unnecessary, for Scott did not omit to record Swift's failings and to express wholesomely vigorous opinions concerning them, though he felt that they ought to be looked upon as evidences of disease rather than of guilt. He felt also, with perhaps some excess of charity but surely not such as could be in the least harmful, that "if the Dean's principles were misanthropical, his practice was benevolent. Few have written so much with so little view either to fame or to profit, or to aught but benefit to the public."[3] Jeffrey's condemnation of Scott's point of view was mingled with just praise. He said of the biography: "It is quite fair and moderate in politics; and perhaps rather too indulgent and tender towards individuals of all descriptions,—more full, at least, of kindness and veneration for genius and social virtue, than of indignation at baseness and profligacy. Altogether it is not much like the production of a mere man of letters, or a fastidious speculator in sentiment and morality; but exhibits throughout, and in a very pleasing form, the good sense and large toleration of a man of the world."

The very practical motives that inspired most of Swift's pamphlets would naturally attract Scott. Probably it was the remembrance of the *Drapier's Letters* that suggested to him a similar form of protest against proposed changes in the Scottish currency; certainly the *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther* had an effect comparable to that of Swift's more consummately ingenious appeal. Another quality in Swift's work that would naturally arouse Scott's admiration was the remarkable directness and lucidity of the style. Scott appreciated the originality and force of Swift, even when it was used in the service of

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 20.
[2] September, 1816.
[3] *Swift,* Vol. XVII, p. 4, note.

satire. Sometimes, he says, "the intensity of his satire gives to his poetry a character of emphatic violence which borders upon grandeur."[1] The editor's discussion of *Gulliver's Travels*, an acute and illuminating little essay, contains one comment that gives an amusing revelation of his point of view. He says in regard to the fourth part of the story: "It is some consolation to remark that the fiction on which this libel on human nature rests is in every respect gross and improbable, and, far from being entitled to the praise due to the management of the first two parts, is inferior in plan even to the third."[2] This is a sound verdict, even if it does contain an extra-literary element. Scott surpassed most of his contemporaries, except the younger Romantic writers, in his ability to eliminate irrelevant considerations in estimating any literary work; and if occasionally his strong moral feeling appears in his criticism, it serves to remind us how much less often this happens than a knowledge of his temperament would lead us to expect. In spite of the qualities in his subject that might naturally bias Scott's judgment, his criticism throughout this edition of Swift seems on the whole very judicious. It defines the literary importance and brings out plainly the power of a man whose work presents unusual perplexities to the critic.

The Somers Tracts

Character of the collection and of Scott's work on it — Occasional carelessness — Purpose of the notes — Scott's attitude towards these studies.

While Scott was working on his *Dryden* and before he began the *Swift* he undertook to edit the great collection which had been published fifty years before as *Somers' Tracts*. His task was to arrange, revise, and annotate pamphlets which represented every reign from Elizabeth to George I. He grouped them chronologically by reigns, and separated them further into sections under the headings,—Ecclesiastical, Historical, Civil, Military, Miscellaneous; he also added eighty-one pamphlets, all written before the time of James II. The largest

[1] *Life of Swift*, conclusion. [2] *Swift*, Vol. XI, p. 12.

number of additions in any one section was historical and had reference to Strafford. Among the miscellaneous tracts that he incorporated were Derrick's *Image of Ireland* from a copy in the Advocates' Library, and Gosson's *School of Abuse.* Scott's statement in the Advertisement as to why he did not omit any of the original collection shows his unpedantic attitude toward the kind of studies which he was encouraging by the republication of this series. He says: "When the variety of literary pursuits, and the fluctuation of fashionable study is considered, it may seem rash to pass a hasty sentence of exclusion, even upon the dullest and most despised of the essays which this ample collection offers to the public. There may be among the learned, even now, individuals to whom the rabbinical lore of Hugh Broughton presents more charms than the verses of Homer; and a future day may arise when tracts on chronology will bear as high a value among antiquaries as 'Greene's Groats' Worth of Wit,' or 'George Peele's Jests,' the present respectable objects of research and reverence."

In editing this collection Scott made little attempt to decide disputed problems of authorship when the explanation did not lie upon the surface. Indeed the following note regarding the tract called *A New Test of the Church of England's Loyalty* shows that he sometimes neglected very obvious sources of information, for the piece is given in one of Defoe's own collections of his works: "This defence of whiggish loyalty," says Scott, "seems to have been written by the celebrated Daniel De Foe, a conjecture which is strengthened by the frequent reference to his poem of the True-born Englishman."[1] He was not often so careless, but the rapidity and range of his work during these years undoubtedly gave occasion for more than one lapse of accuracy, while at the same time it perhaps increased the effectiveness of his comment.

[1] Vol. IX, p. 569. The tract had already been correctly assigned. A similar note on another tract indicates more careful research on the part of the editor. The paper is *A Secret History of One Year,* which had commonly been attributed to Robert Walpole. Scott says: "This tract is not to be found in Mr. Coxe's list of Sir Robert Walpole's publications, nor in that given by his son, the Earl of Oxford, in the Royal and Noble Authors. . . . It does not seem at all probable that Walpole should at this crisis have thought it proper to advocate these principles." (Vol. XIII, p. 873.) The piece is now attributed to Defoe.

His notes and introductions vary in length according to the requirements of the case, for he aimed to provide such material as would prevent the necessity of reference to other works. Matters that were obscure he explained, and he wrote little comment on those that were generally understood. When he left himself so free a hand he could indulge his personal tastes somewhat also, and we are not surprised to find an especial abundance of notes on an account of the Gowrie Conspiracy, which presented a perplexing problem in Scottish history.

The connection of *Somers' Tracts* with other things that Scott did has already been remarked upon.[1] That he found some sort of stimulation in all his scholarly employments is sufficiently evident to anyone who studies his work as a whole, and this fact might well serve as a motive for such study. Yet it is only fair to remember that Scott was not a novelist during these years when he was performing his most laborious editorial tasks. We are accustomed to think of the brilliant use he was afterwards to make of the knowledge he was gaining, but the motives which influenced him were those of the man whose interest in literature and history makes scholarly work seem the most natural way of earning money. "These are studies, indeed, proverbially dull," he once wrote, speaking of Horace Walpole's antiquarian researches, "but it is only when they are pursued by those whose fancies nothing can enliven."[2]

The Lives of the Novelists, and Comments on Other Eighteenth Century Writers

The *Novelists' Library*—Writers discussed—Value of the *Lives*—General tone of competence in these essays—Scott's catholic taste—Points of special interest in the discussion—Relations of the novel and the drama—Supernatural machinery in novels—Mistakes in the criticism of Defoe—Realism—Motive in the novel—Aim of the prefaces—Scott's familiarity with eighteenth century literature.

It has already been said that a large part of Scott's critical work concerned itself with the eighteenth century. Of his greater editorial labors two may be considered as belonging to that period, for Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library,* though an

[1] See above, p. 4. [2] *Horace Walpole,* in *Lives of the Novelists.*

enterprise which was commercially a failure and which consequently remained incomplete, may from the point of view of Scott's contributions fitly be compared with the *Dryden* and the *Swift*. Such parts as were published appeared in 1821. The bulk of the volumes and the small type in which they were printed were considered to be the cause of their failure, and it was not until the critical biographies were extracted and published separately, by Galignani the Parisian book-seller, in 1825, that they seem to have attracted notice.

Scott wrote these *Lives of the Novelists* at a time when his hands were full of literary projects, altogether for John Ballantyne's benefit. The author afterwards spoke of them as "rather flimsily written,"[1] but we may surmise that to the fact that they were not the result of special study is due something of their ripeness of reflection and breadth of generalization. "They contain a large assemblage of manly and sagacious remarks on human life and manners,"[2] wrote the *Quarterly* reviewer.

The writers considered were all British, with the exception of LeSage. The choice, or at least the arrangement, seems more or less haphazard. Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett naturally began the group, and Sterne followed after an interval. Johnson and Goldsmith were treated briefly, for the prefaces were to be proportioned to the amount of work by each author included in the text. Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, and Mrs. Radcliffe represented the Gothic romance. Charles Johnstone, Robert Bage, and Richard Cumberland were among the inferior writers included. Henry Mackenzie, who was still living and was a personal friend of Scott, completes the list so far as it went before the series was terminated by the publisher's death. When Scott's *Miscellaneous Prose Works* were collected he added the lives of Charlotte Smith and Defoe, but in each of these cases the biographical portion was by another hand, the criticism being his own.[3]

The study of the novel as a *genre* was naturally undeveloped at that time. Dunlop's *History of Prose Fiction* had appeared

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 512. [2] *Quarterly*, September, 1826.
[3] See his explanation, in the articles themselves.

in 1814, evidently a much more ambitious attempt than Scott's; but Scott could treat the British novelists with comparative freedom from the trammels of any established precedent. Of course his position as one who had struck out a wonderful new path in the writing of novels gave to his reflections on other novelists a very special interest. The *Lives of the Novelists* are not to be neglected even now, and this is the more to be insisted on because the criticism of novels has been practiced with increasing zeal since Scott himself has become a classic, and since his successors have made this field of literature more varied and popular, if not greater, than the first masters made it. A recent writer on eighteenth century literature says: "By far the best criticism of the eighteenth century novelists will be found in the prefatory notices contributed by Scott to Ballantyne's *Novelists' Library.*"[1] But the same writer adds: "Sir Walter Scott, indeed, considered *Fathom* superior to *Jonathan Wild,* an opinion which must always remain one of the mysteries of criticism."[2]

This comment indicates that there was no lack of assuredness in Scott's treatment, and we do indeed find a very pleasant tone of competence which, though liable to error as in the exaggerated praise bestowed upon Smollett, gives much of their effectiveness to the criticisms. The quality appears elsewhere in Scott's critical work, but it is perhaps especially noticeable here. For example, we find this dictum: "There is no book in existence, in which so much of the human character, under all its various shades and phases, is described in so few words, as in the *Diable Boiteux.*"[3] The illustration is perhaps a trifle extreme, for Scott is not often really dogmatic. From this point of view as from others we naturally make the comparison with Johnson's *Lives of the Poets,* and we find that without being so sententious, so admirably compact in style, Scott is also not so dictatorial.

We cannot accuse Scott of liking any one kind of novel to the exclusion of others. He ranks *Clarissa Harlowe* very

[1] *The Mid-Eighteenth Century,* by J. H. Millar, p. 143, note.

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 159. Scott compares Fielding and Smollett at some length in the *Life of Smollett.*

[3] *Life of Le Sage.*

high;[1] he says *Tom Jones* is "truth and human nature itself."[2] *The Vicar of Wakefield* he calls "one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed." "We return to it again and again," he says, "and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature."[3] He praises *Tristram Shandy,* calling Uncle Toby and his faithful Squire, "the most delightful characters in the work, or perhaps in any other."[4] The quiet fictions of Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen, the exciting tales of Mrs. Radcliffe, the sentiment of Sterne, even the satires of Bage,—all pleased him in one way or another. Scott's autobiography contains the following comment on his boyish tastes in the matter of novels: "The whole Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy tribe I abhorred, and it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie, to fix my attention upon a domestic tale. But all that was adventurous and romantic I devoured without much discrimination."[5] In later life he learned to exercise his judgment in regard to stories of adventure not less than those of the "domestic" sort, and perhaps the liking for quiet tales grew upon him; at any rate his taste seems remarkably catholic.

The most interesting portions of the *Lives of the Novelists* are those which show us, by the frequent recurrence of the same subjects, what parts of the theory of novel-writing had particularly engaged Scott's attention. For example we find him discussing, most fully in the *Life of Fielding,* the reasons why a successful novelist is likely not to be a successful playwright. The way in which he looks at the matter suggests that he was thinking quite as much of the probability of failure in his own case should he begin to write plays, as of the subject of the memoir; for Fielding wrote his plays before his novels, but the argument assumes a man who writes good novels first and bad plays afterwards. One of his statements seems rather curious and hard to explain,—"Though a good acting play may be made by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, yet scarce any effort of genius could render a

[1] *Life of Richardson.* [2] *Life of Fielding.*

[3] *Life of Goldsmith.* As we might expect, Scott speaks rather too favorably of Goldsmith's hack work in history and science.

[4] *Life of Sterne.* [5] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 35.

play into a narrative romance." Perhaps he expected the "Terryfied" versions of *Guy Mannering* and *Rob Roy* to hold the stage longer than fate has permitted them to do. From another point of view also he was interested in the connection of the novel and the drama. He felt that the direction of the drama in the modern period had been largely determined by the influence of successful novels; and he probably overestimated the effect of the "romances of Calprenède and Scudéri" on heroic tragedy.[1]

A subject which recurs even oftener than that of the distinction between drama and novel is the question of supernatural machinery in novels. Horace Walpole is commended for giving us ghosts without furnishing explanations. Indeed the *Castle of Otranto* is highly praised;[2] but so also is Mrs. Radcliffe's work, except on the one point of the attempt to rationalize mysteries. The kind of romance which she "introduced"[3] is compared with the melodrama, and its particular mode of appeal is analyzed in very interesting fashion. In the *Life of Clara Reeve* the proper treatment of ghosts is discussed at length, for that author had contended that ghosts should be very mild and of "sober demeanour." Scott justifies her practice, but not her theory, on the following grounds: "What are the limits to be placed to the reader's credulity, when those of common-sense and ordinary nature are at once exceeded? The question admits only one answer, namely, that the author himself, being in fact the magician, shall evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endowing with manners and language corresponding to their supernatural character."

Scott writes with much enthusiasm about Defoe's famous little ghost-story, *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal,* praising Defoe's wonderful skill in making the unreal seem credible. In connection with this tale Scott developed a very interesting anecdote to explain the fact that Drelincourt's *Defence against the Fear of Death* is recommended by the apparition. "Dre-

[1] See above, p. 53, note.

[2] See also the Introductory epistle to *Ivanhoe;* and the Review of *Walpole's Letters.* "In attaining his contemporary triumph," says Mr. Brander Matthews, "Scott owed more to Horace Walpole than to Maria Edgeworth." *The Historical Novel,* p. 10.

[3] Scott uses the word.

lincourt's book," he says, "being neglected, lay a dead stock on the hands of the publisher. In this emergency he applied to De Foe to assist him (by dint of such means as were then, as well as now, pretty well understood in the literary world) in rescuing the unfortunate book from the literary death to which general neglect seemed about to consign it." Scott goes on to assert that the story was simply a consummately clever advertising device. He may have found the germ of his hypothesis in a book-seller's tradition, but he states it as an assured fact, and doubtless believed it firmly because it seemed so beautifully reasonable. His explanation became the basis of later statements on the subject, and now obliges everyone who discusses Defoe to supply a contradiction; for the truth is that Drelincourt's book was so highly popular as to have gone through several editions before the ghost of Mrs. Veal mentioned it. Moreover, if Scott's little tale was fictitious, Defoe's, on the other hand, was really a reporter's version of an experience actually related by the person to whom he assigns it, and his skill in achieving verisimilitude was perhaps in this case less wonderful than his critics have generally supposed.[1]

On the subject of realism, Scott was not in general very rigid. In his *Life of Richardson* he says: "It is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have the less title to do so, because, in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable."[2] But this is perhaps only a plea for one kind

[1] Mr. G. A. Aitken has given convincing evidence that the story was not invented by Defoe. Mr. Aitken also shows the falsity of Scott's statement that Drelincourt's book was in need of advertising, as William Lee, in his *Life of Defoe,* had previously done. (See *The Nineteenth Century,* xxxvii: 95, January, 1895; and also Aitken's edition of Defoe's *Romances and Narratives,* Vol. XV, Introduction.) A passage from Defoe's *History of the Church of Scotland* is quoted in the review of *Tales of My Landlord,* by Scott, who says that it probably suggested one of the scenes in *Old Mortality.* Scott there speaks of Defoe's "liveliness of imagination," and says he "excelled all others in dramatizing a story, and presenting it as if in actual speech and action before the reader." (*Quarterly Review,* January, 1817.)

[2] See also *The Fortunes of Nigel,* Vol. II, pp. 88–9.

of realism. He also refers to the question of historical "keeping," and concludes that it is possible to have so much accuracy that the public will refuse to be interested, as *Lear* would hardly be popular on the stage if the hero were represented in the bearskin and paint which a Briton of his time doubtless wore.[1]

The motive of the novel is a subject which naturally engages the attention of the novelist-critic. Romantic fiction, he thinks, may have sufficient justification if it acts as an opiate for tired spirits. A significant antithesis between his point of view in this matter and the more common attitude taken by critics in his time is illustrated by two reviews of Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein,* to which we may refer, though the book was later than those included in the *Novelists' Library.* Scott wrote in *Blackwood's:* "We . . . congratulate our readers upon a novel which excites new reflections and untried sources of emotion."[2] The *Quarterly* reviewer took the opposite and more conservative attitude and expressed himself thus: "Our taste and our judgment alike revolt at this kind of writing, and the greater the ability with which it may be executed the worse it is—it inculcates no lesson of conduct, manners, or morality; it cannot mend, and will not even amuse its readers, unless their taste has been deplorably vitiated—it fatigues the feelings without interesting the understanding; it gratuitously harasses the heart, and wantonly adds to the store, already too great, of painful sensations."[3] In general Scott minimizes the effect of any moral that may be expressed in the novel, but occasionally he seems inconsistent, when he is talking of sentiments that are peculiarly distasteful to him.[4] But his thesis is that "the direct and obvious moral to be deduced from a fictitious narrative is of much less consequence to the public than the mode in which the story is treated in the course of its details."[5] In the *Life of Fielding* he says of novels: "The best which can be hoped is that they may sometimes instruct

[1] *Life of Clara Reeve.* [2] *Blackwood,* March, 1818.
[3] *Quarterly,* May, 1818.
[4] See a reference to Voltaire and other French authors; *Napoleon,* Vol. I, ch. 2.
[5] *Life of Richardson.*

the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment, and tales of fictitious woe. Beyond this point they are a mere elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life."

He conceived that his prefaces might be useful to warn readers against any ill effects that might otherwise result from the reading of the accompanying texts; and our comments on the *Lives of the Novelists* may fitly close with a quotation which shows the writer's attitude toward the novels and his own criticisms upon them. The passage is taken from the *Life of Bage.* "We did not think it proper to reject the works of so eminent an author from this collection, merely on account of speculative errors.[1] We have done our best to place a mark on these; and as we are far from being of opinion that the youngest and most thoughtless derive their serious opinions from productions of this nature, we leave them for our reader's amusement, trusting that he will remember that a good jest is no argument; that the novelist, like the master of a puppet-show, has his drama under his absolute authority, and shapes the events to favour his own opinions; and that whether the Devil flies away with Punch, or Punch strangles the Devil, forms no real argument as to the comparative power of either one or other, but only indicates the special pleasure of the master of the motion."

Scott was deeply in sympathy with the literature of the century within which he was born. To the evidence of his *Swift* and of the *Lives of the Novelists* it may be added that he contemplated making a complete edition of Pope, and that he professed to like *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* the best of all poems. James Ballantyne said, rather ambiguously, "I think I never saw his countenance more indicative of high

[1] We gather from Scott's article that he considered the following to be the chief "speculative errors" of Bage: he was an infidel; he misrepresented different classes of society, thinking the high tyrannical and the low virtuous and generous; his system of ethics was founded on philosophy instead of religion; he was inclined to minimize the importance of purity in women; he considered tax-gatherers extortioners, and soldiers, licensed murderers.

admiration than while reciting aloud from those productions."[1] In one of his letters Scott spoke of the "beautiful and feeling verses by Dr. Johnson to the memory of his humble friend Levett, . . . which with me, though a tolerably ardent Scotchman, atone for a thousand of his prejudices."[2] Not only did he admire the great biography, but he called Boswell "such a biographer as no man but [Johnson] ever had, or ever deserved to have."[3] But he once said that many of the *Ramblers* were "little better than a sort of pageant, where trite and obvious maxims are made to swagger in lofty and mystic language, and get some credit only because they are not understood."[4]

Among other eighteenth century writers, Addison is distinguished by high praise in a few casual references,[5] but Scott once admitted that he did not like Addison so much as he felt to be proper.[6] A collection of Prior's poems Scott calls "an English classic of the first order."[7] He speaks of Parnell as "an admirable man and elegant poet,"[8] and mentions "the ponderous, persevering, and laborious dullness of Sir Richard Blackmore."[9] But these observations are of little importance except as they indicate that Scott had read the authors of the eighteenth century and acquiesced in the conventional judgments upon them. It is seldom in his brief and casual comments that Scott is particularly interesting as a critic, except when he is speaking of living writers, for he lacked the gift of conciseness. When he has a large canvas he is at his best, and this he has in the principal works described in this chapter:—*The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* the *Works of Dryden,* the *Works of Swift,* and the *Lives of the Novelists.*

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 132.

[2] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 192. In his *George the Third,* Thackeray said: "Do you remember the verses—the sacred verses—which Johnson wrote on the death of his humble friend Levett?" (Biographical edition of Thackeray, Vol. VII, p. 671.)

[3] *Life of Johnson.*

[4] Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate.*

[5] *Dryden,* Vol. XI, p. 81, note; Review of the *Life and Works of John Home, Quarterly,* June, 1827.

[6] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 44.

[7] *Swift,* Vol. XVI, p. 275, note. On one of the last sad days before Sir Walter left Scotland for his Italian journey he quoted in full Prior's poem on Mézéray's History of France. (*Lockhart,* Vol. V, pp. 339–40.)

[8] *Swift,* Vol. III, p. 36.

[9] *Ibid.,* Vol. XIII, p. 24.

CHAPTER IV

Scott's Criticism of his Contemporaries

Scott's freedom from literary jealousy—His disapproval of the typical reviewer's attitude—Jeffrey, Gifford, and Lockhart—His own practice in regard to reviewing—His informal critical remarks—Opportunity for favorable judgments afforded by the number of important writers in his period.

Poets — Burns — Coleridge — Relation of *Christabel* to Scott's work — Scott's dislike for extreme Romanticism — Wordsworth — Southey — Scott's review of *Kehama* — Byron — Scott's opinion of Byron's character — Campbell — Moore — Allan Cunningham — Hogg — Crabbe — Joanna Baillie — Matthew Lewis — Scott's judgment on his early taste for poetry — Absence of comment on the work of Lamb, Landor, Hunt, Hazlitt, and DeQuincey.

Novelists—Jane Austen—Maria Edgeworth—Cooper—Personal relations between Scott and Cooper—Scott's verdict on Americans in general—Washington Irving—Goethe—Fouqué—Scott's interest in men of action.

To study Scott's relations with contemporary writers is a very pleasant task because nothing shows better the greatness of his heart. His admirable freedom from literary jealousy was an innate virtue which he deliberately increased by cultivation, taking care, also, never to subject himself to the conditions which he thought accounted for the faults of Pope, who had "neither the business nor the idleness of life to divide his mind from his Parnassian pursuits."[1] "Those who have not his genius may be so far compensated by avoiding his foibles," Scott said; and some years later he wrote,—"When I first saw that a literary profession was to be my fate, I endeavoured by all efforts of stoicism to divest myself of that irritable degree of sensibility—or, to speak plainly, of vanity—which makes the poetical race miserable and ridiculous."[2] The record of his life clearly shows that his kindness towards other men of letters was not limited to words. One who received his good offices has written,—"The sternest words I ever heard him

[1] *Correspondence of C. K. Sharpe,* Vol. II, p. 194.
[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 67; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 401.

utter were concerning a certain poet: 'That man,' he said, 'has had much in his power, but he never befriended rising genius yet.'"[1] We may safely say that Scott enjoyed liking the work of other men. "I am most delighted with praise from those who convince me of their good taste by admiring the genius of my contemporaries,"[2] he once wrote to Southey.

It is commonly supposed that Scott's amiability led him into absurd excesses of praise for the works of his fellow-craftsmen, and indeed he did say some very surprising things. But when all his references to any one man are brought together, they will be found, with a few exceptions, pretty fairly to characterize the writer. His *obiter dicta* must be read in the light of one another, and in the light, also, of his known principles. Temperamentally modest about his own work, he was also habitually optimistic, and the combination gave him an utterly different quality from that of the typical *Edinburgh* or *Quarterly* critics.

His disapproval of their point of view he expressed more than once.[3] It seemed to him futile and ungentlemanly for the anonymous reviewer to seek primarily for faults, or "to wound any person's feelings . . . unless where conceit or false doctrine strongly calls for reprobation."[4] "Where praise can be conscientiously mingled in a larger proportion than blame," he said, "there is always some amusement in throwing together our ideas upon the works of our fellow-labourers." He thought, indeed, that vituperative and satiric criticism was defeating its own end, in the case of the *Edinburgh Review*, since it was overworked to the point of monotony. Such criticism he considered futile as well on this account as because

[1] Allan Cunningham's *Life of Scott*, p. 96.

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 483.

[3] See the satirical paragraph in his review of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, on the habits of reviewers in general. "We are perfectly aware," he says, "that, according to the modern canons of criticism, the Reviewer is expected to show his immense superiority to the author reviewed, and at the same time to relieve the tediousness of narration, by turning the epic, dramatic, moral story before him into quaint and lively burlesque." (*Quarterly*, May, 1809.) In his review of the *Life and Works of John Home* he speaks of "the hackneyed rules of criticism, which, having crushed a hundred poets, will never, it may be prophesied, create, or assist in creating, a single one." (*Quarterly*, June, 1827.)

[4] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 363.

he thought it likely to have an injurious effect on the work of really gifted writers.

An admirer of both Jeffrey and Scott, who once heard a conversation between the two men, has recorded a distinction which is exactly what we should expect.[1] He says: "Jeffrey, for the most part, entertained us, when books were under discussion, with the detection of faults, blunders, absurdities, or plagiarisms: Scott took up the matter where he left it, recalled some compensating beauty or excellence for which no credit had been allowed, and by the recitation, perhaps, of one fine stanza, set the poor victim on his legs again."

On Jeffrey Scott's verdict was, "There is something in his mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether, notwithstanding the vivacity of his imagination, he really has any *feeling* of poetical genius, or whether he has worn it all off by perpetually sharpening his wit on the grindstone of criticism."[2] His comment on Gifford's reviews was to the effect that people were more moved to dislike the critic for his savagery than the guilty victim whom he flagellated.[3] In the early days of *Blackwood's Magazine* Scott often tried to repress Lockhart's "wicked wit,"[4] and when Lockhart became editor of the *Quarterly* his father-in-law did not always approve of his work. "Don't like his article on Sheridan's life,"[5] says the *Journal*. "There is no breadth in it, no general views, the whole flung away in smart but party criticism. Now, no man can take more general and liberal views of literature than J. G. L."[6]

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 501. For a further comparison of Scott and Jeffrey as critics see below, pp. 134–5.

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 204.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 97.

[4] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 262.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 173.

[6] In general Scott admired Lockhart. "I have known the most able men of my time," he once wrote, "and I never met any one who had such ready command of his own mind, and possessed in a greater degree the power of making his talents available upon the shortest notice, and upon any subject." (*Life of Murray*, Vol. II, p. 222.) But in Lockhart's earlier days Scott said, "I am sometimes angry with him for an exuberant love of fun in his light writings, which he has caught, I think, from Wilson, a man of greater genius than himself perhaps, but who disputes with low adversaries, which I think a terrible error, and indulges in a sort of humour which exceeds the bounds of playing at ladies and gentlemen, a game to which I have been partial all my life." (*Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart*, p. 225.)

With these opinions, Scott was not likely often to undertake the reviewing of books that did not, in one way or another, interest him or move his admiration; and he would lay as much stress as possible on their good points. Gifford told him that "fun and feeling" were his forte.[1] In his early days he was probably somewhat influenced by Jeffrey's method, and his articles on Todd's *Spenser* and Godwin's *Life of Chaucer* indicate that he could occasionally adopt something of the tone of the *Edinburgh Review*. Years afterwards he refused to write an article that Lockhart wanted for the *Quarterly*, saying, "I cannot write anything about the author unless I know it can hurt no one alive";[2] but for the first volume of the *Quarterly* he reviewed Sir John Carr's *Caledonian Sketches* in a way that Sharon Turner seriously objected to, because it made Sir John seem ridiculous.[3] Some of Scott's critics would perhaps apply one of the strictures to himself: "Although Sir John quotes Horace, he has yet to learn that a wise man should not admire too easily; for he frequently falls into a state of wonderment at what appears to us neither very new nor very extraordinary."[4] But if admiration seems to characterize too great a proportion of Scott's critical work, it is because he usually preferred to ignore such books as demanded the sarcastic treatment which he reprehended, but which he felt perfectly capable of applying when he wished. Speaking of a fulsome biography he once said, "I can no more sympathize with a mere eulogist than I can with a ranting hero upon the stage; and it unfortunately happens that some of our disrespect is apt, rather unjustly, to be transferred to the subject of the panegyric in the one case, and to poor Cato in the other."[5]

Besides Scott's formal reviews, we find cited as evidence of his extreme amiability his letters, his journal, and the remarks he made to friends in moments of enthusiasm. These do indeed contain some sweeping statements, but in almost every case one can see some reason, other than the desire to be obliging, why he made them. He was not double-faced. One of the nearest approaches to it seems to have been in the case of

[1] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. II, p. 400.
[2] Lang's *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 406.
[3] *Life of Murray*, Vol. I, pp. 146–7.
[4] *Quarterly*, February, 1809.
[5] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 327.

Miss Seward's poetry, for which he wrote such an introduction as hardly prepares the reader for the remark he made to Miss Baillie, that most of it was "absolutely execrable." His comment in the edition of the poems—the publication of which Miss Seward really forced upon him as a dying request—is sedulously kind, and in *Waverley* he quotes from her a couple of lines which he calls "beautiful." But the essay is most carefully guarded, and throughout it the editor implies that the woman was more admirable than the poetry. Personally, indeed, he seems to have liked and admired her.[1]

The catalogue of Scott's contemporaries is so full of important names that his genius for the enjoyment of other men's work had a wide opportunity to display itself without becoming absurd. An argument early used to prove that Scott was the author of *Waverley* was the frequency of quotation in the novels from all living poets except Scott himself, and he felt constrained to throw in a reference or two to his own poetry in order to weaken the force of the evidence.[2] The reader is irresistibly reminded of the following description, given by Lockhart in a letter to his wife, of a morning walk taken by Wordsworth and Scott in company: "The Unknown was continually quoting Wordsworth's Poetry and Wordsworth ditto, but the great Laker never uttered one syllable by which it might have been intimated to a stranger that your Papa had ever written a line either of verse or prose since he was born."[3]

[1] Scott wrote a poetical epitaph for the burial place of Miss Seward and her father. See *Edinburgh Annual Register,* Vol. II, pt. 2. In the introduction to *The Tapestried Chamber,* Scott said, "It was told to me many years ago by the late Miss Anna Seward, who, among other accomplishments that rendered her an amusing inmate in a country house, had that of recounting narratives of this sort with very considerable effect; much greater, indeed, than anyone would be apt to guess from the style of her written performances." It must be remembered that Miss Seward was one of the first persons of any literary note, outside of Edinburgh, to show an interest in Scott's work, and he committed himself to admiration of her poetry when he was still in a rather uncritical stage. In regard to his later feeling about her see *Recollections,* by R. P. Gillies, *Fraser's,* xiii: 692, January, 1836.

[2] J. L. Adolphus, in an interesting passage in his *Letters to Heber on the Authorship of Waverley,* noted many of the references to contemporary poets. See pp. 53–4. See also Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age,* art. *Sir Walter Scott.*

[3] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 341. See also a similar anecdote in Forster's *Life of Landor,* Vol. II, p. 244.

Scott's opinions in regard to his fellow craftsmen may best be given largely in his own words—words which cannot fail to be interesting, however little evidence they show of any attempt to make them quotable.

In considering Scott's estimation of his contemporaries it is chronologically proper to mention Burns first. As a boy of fifteen Scott met Burns, an event which filled him with the suitable amount of awe. He was most favorably impressed with the poet's appearance and with everything in his manner. The boy thought, however, that "Burns' acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models."[1] Scott's admiration of Burns was always expressed in the highest and, if one may say so, the most affectionate terms. He refused to let himself be named "in the same day" with Burns.[2] "Long life to thy fame and peace to thy soul, Rob Burns!" he exclaimed, in his *Journal;* "when I want to express a sentiment which I feel strongly, I find the phrase in Shakespeare—or thee."[3] On another day he compared Burns with Shakspere as excelling all other poets in "the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions."[4] Again, "The Jolly Beggars, for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry."[5] Scott wished that Burns might have carried out his plan of dramatic composition, and regretted, from that point of view, the excessive labor at songs which in the nature of things could not all be masterpieces.[5]

Of writers who were more precisely contemporaries of Scott, the Lake Poets and Byron are the most important. The precedence ought to be given to Coleridge because of the suggestion Scott caught from a chance recitation of *Christabel* for the

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, pp. 116–17.
[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 132.
[3] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 321.
[4] Review of *Cromek's Reliques of Burns, Quarterly,* February, 1809.
[5] *Ibid.*

meter he made so popular in the *Lay*.[1] Fragments from *Christabel* are quoted or alluded to so often in the novels[2] and throughout Scott's work that we should conclude it had made a greater impression upon him than any other single poem written in his own time, if Lockhart had not spoken of Wordsworth's sonnet on Neidpath Castle as one which Scott was perhaps fondest of quoting.[3] *Christabel* is not the only one of Coleridge's poems which Scott used for allusion or reference, but it was the favorite. "He is naturally a grand poet," Scott once wrote to a friend. "His verses on Love, I think, are among the most beautiful in the English language. Let me know if you have seen them, as I have a copy of them as they stood in their original form, which was afterwards altered for the worse."[4] The *Ancient Mariner* also made a decided impression on him, if we judge from the fact that he quoted

[1] Crabbe Robinson, in his diary (quoted by Knight in his edition of Wordsworth, Vol. X, p. 189), says that Coleridge and his friends "consider Scott as having stolen the verse" of *Christabel*. On this point see also a letter by Coleridge, given in Meteyard's *Group of Englishmen*, pp. 327–8. In 1807 Coleridge wrote to Southey: "I did not over-hugely admire the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' but saw no likeness whatever to the 'Christabel,' much less any improper resemblance." (*Letters of Coleridge*, ed. by E. H. Coleridge, Vol. II, p. 523.) Yet Mr. Lang seems to think that in this matter Scott "showed something of the deficient sense of *meum* and *tuum* which marked his freebooting ancestors." (*Sir Walter Scott*, p. 36.) Apparently Scott never dreamed that the matter could be looked at in this way. In Lockhart's *Scott* (Vol. II, pp. 77–8) we find described an occasion on which the two men once met in London, when they were asked, with other poets who were present, to recite from their unpublished writings. Coleridge complied with the request, but Scott said he had nothing of his own and would repeat some stanzas he had seen in a newspaper. The poem was criticised adversely in spite of Scott's protests, till Coleridge lost patience and exclaimed, "Let Mr. Scott alone; I wrote the poem." Coleridge's lines:

> "The Knight's bones are dust
> And his good sword rust,
> His soul is with the saints, I trust,"

are probably much better known as they appear in *Ivanhoe*, incorrectly quoted, than in their proper form. Scott also added a note on Coleridge in this connection. (*Ivanhoe*, Chapter VIII.)

[2] But apparently not in any earlier than *The Black Dwarf*, which was written in 1816, the year in which the poem was published. It was about 1803 that Scott heard *Christabel* recited. See *Familiar Letters*, Vol. II, p. 221.

[3] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 356.

[4] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 315.

from it several times.[1] Scott evidently felt that Coleridge was a most tantalizing poet, and once intimated that future generations would in regard to him feel something like Milton's desire "to call up him who left half told the story of Cambuscan bold."[2] "No man has all the resources of poetry in such profusion, but he cannot manage them so as to bring out anything of his own on a large scale at all worthy of his genius. . . . His fancy and diction would have long ago placed him above all his contemporaries, had they been under the direction of a sound judgment and a steady will."[3] Such, in effect, was the opinion that Scott always expressed concerning Coleridge, and it is practically that of posterity. In *The Monastery* Coleridge is called "the most imaginative of our modern bards." In another connection, after speaking of the "exquisite powers of poetry he has suffered to remain uncultivated," Scott adds, "Let us be thankful for what we have received, however. The unfashioned ore, drawn from so rich a mine, is worth all to which art can add its highest decorations, when drawn from less abundant sources."[4] These remarks are worth quoting, not only because of their wisdom, but also because Scott had small personal acquaintance with Coleridge and was rather repelled than attracted by what he knew of the character of the author of *Christabel*. His praises cannot in this case be called the tribute of friendship, and his own remarkable power of self-control might have made him a stern judge of Coleridge's shortcomings.

One of his most interesting comments on Coleridge is contained in a discussion of Byron's *Darkness*, a poem which to his mind recalled "the wild, unbridled, and fiery imagination of Coleridge."[5] *Darkness* is characterized as a mass of images and ideas, unarranged, and the critic goes on to warn the author against indulging in this sort of poetry. He says: "The feeling of reverence which we entertain for that which

[1] See *Letters to Heber*, p. 293; *On Imitations of the Ancient Ballad; Lockhart*, Vol. III, pp. 56 and 264; *Quentin Durward*, Vol. II, p. 394.

[2] Note in *The Abbot*.

[3] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 223.

[4] Note in *St. Ronan's Well*. See also the comment on *Wallenstein* in *Paul's Letters*, Letter XV.

[5] Review of *Childe Harold, Canto III, Quarterly*, October, 1816.

is difficult of comprehension, gives way to weariness whenever we begin to suspect that it cannot be distinctly comprehended by anyone. . . . The strength of poetical conception and beauty of diction bestowed upon such prolusions [*sic*], is as much thrown away as the colors of a painter, could he take a cloud of mist or a wreath of smoke for his canvas." It is disappointing that we have no comment from Scott upon Shelley's poetry, but we can imagine what is would have been.[1] Scott's position as the great popularizer of the Romantic movement in poetry makes particularly interesting his very evident though not often expressed repugnance to the more extreme development of that movement.

Wordsworth's peculiar theory of poetry seemed to Scott superfluous and unnecessary, though he was never, so far as we can judge, especially irritated by it.[2] Of Wordsworth and Southey he wrote to Miss Seward: "Were it not for the unfortunate idea of forming a new school of poetry, these men are calculated to give it a new impulse; but I think they sometimes lose their energy in trying to find not a better but a different path from what has been travelled by their predecessors."[3] Scott paid tribute in the introduction to *The Antiquary* to as much of Wordsworth's poetical creed as he could acquiesce in when he said, "The lower orders are less restrained by the habit of suppressing their feelings, and . . . I agree with my friend Wordsworth that they seldom fail to express them in the strongest and most powerful language." In a letter to Southey Scott calls Wordsworth "a great master of the pas-

[1] In 1818 Scott wrote a review of *Frankenstein* in which it appears that he thought Shelley was the author. Shelley had sent the book with a note in which he said that it was the work of a friend and he had merely seen it through the press; and Scott took this for the conventional evasion so often resorted to by authors. (See Mr. Lang's note in his Introduction to the Waverley Novels, p. lxxxvi.) Scott praises the substance and style of the book, and advises the author to cultivate his poetical powers, in words which make it evident that he did not know Shelley as a poet, though *Alastor* had appeared in 1816. Scott also praises *Frankenstein* in his article on Hoffmann. In reading Scott's novels I have noted two reminiscences of the line, "One word is too often profaned." They are to be found in *Old Mortality*, Vol. II, p. 93, and in *Redgauntlet*, Vol. I, p. 224.

[2] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 179.

[3] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 40.

sions,"[1] and in his *Journal* he said: His imagination "is naturally exquisite, and highly cultivated by constant exercise."[2] At another time he compared Wordsworth and Southey as scholars and commented on the "freshness, vivacity, and spring" of Wordsworth's mind.[3]

The personal relations between Scott and Wordsworth were, as Wordsworth's tribute in *Yarrow Revisited* would indicate, those of affectionate intimacy. And if Scott took exception to Wordsworth's choice of subjects and manner, Wordsworth used the same freedom in disagreeing with Scott's poetical ideals. "Thank you," he wrote in 1808, "for *Marmion*, which I have read with lively pleasure. I think your end has been attained. That it is not in every respect the end which I should wish you to purpose to yourself, you will be well aware, from what you know of my notions of composition, both as to matter and manner."[4] When, in 1821, Chantrey was about to exhibit together his busts of the two poets, Scott wrote: "I am happy my effigy is to go with that of Wordsworth, for (differing from him in very many points of taste) I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius. Why he will sometimes choose to crawl upon all fours, when God has given him so noble a countenance to lift to heaven, I am as little able to account for as for his quarrelling (as you tell me) with the wrinkles which time and meditation have stamped his brow withal."[5]

These remarks upon Wordsworth and Coleridge touch merely the fringe of the subject, and indeed we do not find that Scott exercised any such sublimated ingenuity in appreciating these men as has often been considered essential. We can see that he admired certain parts of their work intensely, but we look in vain for any real analysis of their quality. But as he never had occasion to write essays upon their poetry, it is perhaps hardly fair to expect anything more than the general remarks

[1] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 97. [2] *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 333.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 190.
[4] I quote from the letter as given in Knight's *Wordsworth*, Vol. X, p. 105. Prof. Knight says that Lockhart quotes the letter less exactly. (*Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 489.)
[5] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 428.

that we actually do find, and as far as they go they are satisfactory.

Like most of his distinguished contemporaries, Scott held the work of Southey in surprisingly high estimation.[1] Southey, more than anyone else except Wordsworth, and more than Wordsworth in some ways, was the "real poet" of the period, devoting his whole heart to literature and his whole time to literary pursuits. Scott commented on the fact, saying, "Southey's ideas are all poetical," and, "In this respect, as well as in many others, he is a most striking and interesting character."[2] Nevertheless Scott found it easy to criticise Southey's poems adversely, as we may see from his correspondence. Writing to Miss Seward he pointed out flaws in the story and the characterization of *Madoc*,[3] yet after repeated readings he saw enough to convince him that *Madoc* would in the future "assume his real place at the feet of Milton."[4] *Thalaba* was one of the poems he liked to have read aloud on Sunday evenings.[5] A review of *The Curse of Kehama*, in which he seemed to express the opinion that this surpassed the poet's previous work, illustrates his professed creed as to criticism. He wrote to Ellis concerning his article: "What I could I did, which was to throw as much weight as possible upon the beautiful passages, of which there are many, and to slur over the absurdities, of which there are not a few. . . . This said *Kehama* affords cruel openings for the quizzers, and I suppose will get it roundly in the *Edinburgh Review*. I could

[1] Even Byron admired Southey. He once wrote, "His prose is perfect. Of his poetry there are various opinions: there is, perhaps, too much of it for the present generation; posterity will probably select. He has *passages* equal to anything." (Byron's *Letters and Journals*, ed. Prothero, Vol. II, p. 331.) Shelley also had a high opinion of Southey's work. (Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, Vol. I, p. 158, and pp. 471–2.) Landor liked *Madoc* and *Thalaba* so much that, when he found Southey hesitating to write more poems of a similar kind because they did not pay, he offered to bear the expense of the publication. Southey refused the assistance, but was stimulated by the kindness and considered Landor's encouragement responsible for his later work in poetry. (Forster's *Life of Landor*, Vol. I, pp. 209–214.)

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 307.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 415.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 477; see also *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809, part 2, p. 588.

[5] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 197.

have made a very different hand of it, indeed, had the order of the day been *pour déchirer*."[1] If Scott had to make an effort in writing the review, he made it with abundant energy. Some absurdities are indeed mentioned, but various particular passages are characterized in the most enthusiastic way, with such phrases as "horribly sublime," "impressive and affecting," "reminds us of the Satan of Milton, yet stands the comparison," "all the gloomy power of Dante." It may be noted that Scott used Milton's name rather freely in comparisons, and that for Dante his admiration was altogether unimpassioned,[2] but the review, after all, is on the whole very laudatory.[3] In it Scott awards to Southey the palm for a surpassing share of imagination, which he elsewhere gave to Coleridge. Possibly Scott was the less inclined to be severe over the absurdities of *Kehama* because Southey agreed with his own theory as to the evil of fastidious corrections.[4] At any rate he seems to have been quite sincere in saying to Southey, in connection with the poet-laureateship which, according to Scott's suggestion, was offered to him in 1813, "I am not such an ass as not to know that you are my better in poetry, though I have had, probably but for a time, the tide of popularity in my favour."[5]

Much as Scott admired Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, he considered Byron the great poetical genius of the

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 127.

[2] In his youth Scott read Dante with other Italian authors, but he did not become well acquainted with him, and later even expressed dislike for his work. (See *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 408.) In 1825 he wrote to W. S. Rose, "I will subscribe for Dante with all pleasure, on condition you do not insist on my reading him." (*Fam. Let.*, Vol. II, p. 356.)

[3] It may be interesting to have Southey's comment on the same article. (See *Southey's Letters*, Vol. II, p. 307.) He says, "Bedford has seen the review which Scott has written of it, and which, from his account, though a very friendly one, is, like that of the 'Cid,' very superficial. He sees nothing but the naked story; the moral feeling which pervades it has escaped him. I do not know whether Bedford will be able to get a paragraph interpolated touching upon this, and showing that there is some difference between a work of high imagination and a story of mere amusement." Either Bedford was mistaken in saying that Scott had ignored the moral aspect of the poem, or else he succeeded in getting a passage interpolated, for the review is sufficiently definite on that point.

[4] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 481.

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 296.

period. He once spoke of Byron as the only poet of transcendent talents that England had had since Dryden.[1] At another time his comment was: "He wrote from impulse, never from effort; and therefore I have always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me. We have . . . many men of high poetical talent, but none, I think, of that ever-gushing and perennial fountain of natural water."[2] The likenesses between Byron's poetical manner and Scott's own must have made it easy for the elder poet to recognize the power of the younger, since Scott was innocent of all repining or envy over the fact which he so freely acknowledged in later years, that Byron "beat" him out of the field.[3] From the time of the appearance of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* he acknowledged the author's "extraordinary power,"[4] and even before that he had tried to soften Jeffrey's harsh treatment of *Hours of Idleness.*[5] In 1814 he was ready to say, "Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow."[6]

It was Byron, rather than Scott, who realized the debt of the new popular favorite to the old; and their personal relations were of the pleasantest, though they were never intimate as Scott was with Southey and Wordsworth. As poets, Scott and Byron seem to have understood each other thoroughly.[7] None of the other great poets of the period did justice to Scott, nor did he succeed so well in defining the power of any of the others. His first review of *Childe Harold* is the most important of all his articles on the poetry of his time; and his remarks written at the death of Lord Byron, though brief, are not less full of good judgment. Originality, spontaneity, and the ability and inclination to write rapidly were traits Scott admired most in Byron, and in the vigor and beauty of the

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 413.
[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 112; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 429.
[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 391.
[4] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 211.
[5] Introduction to *Marmion; Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 82.
[6] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 508.
[7] Byron did not altogether approve of Scott's poetry, but he felt its effectiveness. In his "Reply to Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine," Byron wrote: "What have we got instead [of following Pope]? A deluge of flimsy and unintelligible romances, imitated from Scott and myself, who have both made the best of our bad materials and erroneous system."

poems he found the fine flower of all these qualities. "We cannot but repeat our conviction," he says, "that poetry, being, in its higher classes, an art which has for its elements sublimity and unaffected beauty, is more liable than any other to suffer from the labour of polishing. . . . It must be remembered that we speak of the higher tones of composition; there are others of a subordinate character where extreme art and labour are not bestowed in vain. But we cannot consider over-anxious correction as likely to be employed with advantage upon poems like those of Lord Byron, which have for their object to rouse the imagination and awaken the passions."[1]

Byron's temperament was far from being of a sort that Scott could admire, though he was very susceptible to his personal charm: "Byron's countenance is a thing to dream of," he once said;[2] but he felt that popular estimation did Byron injustice. His articles on this poet contain some of his most characteristic moral reflections. Something of Byron's gloominess Scott attributes to the sensitive poetic organization which he felt that Byron had in an extreme degree; but more to the perverted habit of looking within rather than around upon the realities of life, in which Providence intended men to find their happiness. The philosophy is not novel or brilliant; it is only very sincere and very just; and it supplies to Scott's criticism of Byron that element of moral reflection which we feel was necessary to the occasion.[3]

[1] Review of *Childe Harold, Canto III, Quarterly,* October, 1816.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 182.

[3] It should be remembered also that Scott's first review of *Childe Harold* appeared at a time when all England was condemning Byron for his treatment of Lady Byron, and that the article was thought by many to be altogether too lenient. Byron wrote to Murray expressing his pleasure in the review before he knew who was responsible for it, and some years later he wrote to Scott as follows: "To have been recorded by you in such a manner would have been a proud memorial at any time, but at such a time . . . was something still higher to my self-esteem. . . . Had it been a common criticism, however eloquent or panegyrical, I should have felt pleased, undoubtedly, and grateful, but not to the extent which the extraordinary good-heartedness of the whole proceeding must induce in any mind capable of such sensations." (*Byron's Letters and Journals,* Vol. VI, p. 2.) See *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 510, for quotations from Byron showing his admiration for Scott. An interesting contrast between the characters of the two poets is drawn by H. S. Legaré. (See his *Collected Writings,* Vol. II, p. 258.)

But though Scott never failed to express disapproval of Byron's attitude toward life, he kept his criticism on this point essentially distinct from his judgment on the poetry. In a way it was impossible to separate the two subjects, and the public demanded some discussion of the man when his poetry was reviewed. But Scott's verdict on the importance of the poems as such was unaffected by his disapproval of the author's point of view. He praised *Don Juan* no less heartily than *Childe Harold.*

His criticism of *Don Juan* is, however, to be gathered only from short and incidental remarks, as he never reviewed the poem. A satire written by R. P. Gillies is commemorated thus in Scott's *Journal:* "This poem goes to the tune of *Don Juan,* but it is the champagne after it has stood two days with the cork drawn."[1] He called Byron "as various in composition as Shakspeare himself"; and added, "this will be admitted by all who are acquainted with his *Don Juan.* . . . Neither *Childe Harold,* nor any of the most beautiful of Byron's earlier tales, contain more exquisite morsels of poetry than are to be found scattered through the cantos of *Don Juan.*"[2] The defence of *Cain* which Scott wrote in accepting the dedication of that poem to himself is well known.[3] He calls it a "very grand and tremendous drama," and continues, "Byron has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the *Paradise Lost,* if they have a mind to be consistent."

Scott's comments on Byron are closely paralled by those of Goethe, who considered that Byron had the greatest talent of any man of his century.[4] The opinions of continental critics in general were similar. Among English critics Matthew Arnold aroused many protests when he ranked Byron as one of the two greatest English poets of the nineteenth century,

[1] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 221. [2] *Remarks on the Death of Lord Byron.*
[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 525.
[4] See Nichol's *Byron* (English Men of Letters), p. 205; and Arnold's essay on Byron.

but his views seem perfectly rational now; and though he remarked upon the extravagance of Scott's phrases his own verdict was not very unlike that we have been considering.

Scott's enthusiasm about the literature of his own time seems natural enough when we consider that the list of his notable contemporaries is far from exhausted after Burns, the Lake Poets, and Byron have been named. Campbell was a poet of whose powers he thought very highly, but who, he believed, had given only a sample of the great things he might do if he would cease to "fear the shadow of his own reputation." Before he wrote about Byron Scott had given in his review of *Gertrude of Wyoming* an exposition of his opinion as to the dangers of extreme care in revision. "The truth is," he says, "that an author cannot work upon a beautiful poem beyond a certain point without doing it real and irreparable injury in more respects than one."[1] He felt that Campbell had worked, in many cases, beyond the "certain point." For the "impetuous lyric sally," like the *Mariners of England* and the *Battle of the Baltic,* Scott rightly thought that Campbell excelled all his contemporaries. Moore was another lyrist whose poetry Scott greatly admired. In Moore's case, as in Southey's, the contemporary estimate was higher than can now be maintained, but Moore is to-day underrated. From what Scott says about him we conclude that the man's personality and his way of singing added much to the exquisiteness of his songs. "He seems almost to think in music," Scott said, "the notes and words are so happily suited to each other";[2] and, "it would be a delightful addition to life if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one."[3] Allan Cunningham was a young protégé of Scott whose songs, "Its hame and it's hame," and "A wet sheet and a flowing sea," seemed to him "among the best going."[4] Another poet who received Scott's good offices was Hogg, whose relations with the greater man are described so vividly and at some points so amusingly by Lockhart. Scott called him a "wonderful creature for his opportunities."[5]

[1] *Quarterly Review,* May, 1809.
[2] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 341.
[3] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 9.
[4] *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 70.
[5] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 306.

For the poet Crabbe, Scott, like Byron and Wordsworth,[1] had a steady and high admiration. In the Sunday evening readings that Lockhart describes as being so pleasant a feature of the life of the family in Edinburgh, Crabbe was perhaps the chief standing resource after Shakspere.[2] His work was particularly recommended to the young people of the family,[3] and when the venerable poet visited the Scotts in 1822, he was received as a man whom they always looked upon as nobly gifted. Scott once wrote of him: "I think if he had cultivated the sublime and the pathetic instead of the satirical cast of poetry, he must have stood very high (as indeed he does at any rate) on the list of British poets. His *Sir Eustace Grey* and *The Hall of Justice* indicate prodigious talent."[4] Scott did not like Crabbe's choice of subjects,[5] but he appreciated the "force and vigour" of a poet whom students of our own day are once more beginning to admire, after a period during which he was practically ignored.

Scott's very high estimation of Joanna Baillie has already been mentioned.[6] In this case as in many others he was proud and happy in the personal friendship of the writer whose works he admired. He once wrote to Miss Edgeworth: "I have always felt the value of having access to persons of talent and genius to be the best part of a literary man's prerogative."[7] Almost the earliest of the writers for whose friendship Scott

[1] Byron said, "Crabbe's the man, but he has got a coarse and impracticable subject." (Moore's *Life and Letters of Byron*, Vol. IV, pp. 63–4.) Leslie Stephen remarks that Crabbe "was admired by Byron in his rather wayward mood of Pope-worship, as the last representative of the legitimate school." (*English Literature and Society in the 18th Century*, p. 207.)

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 197.

[3] The reader will at once recall the ingenuous remark of Sophia Scott when she was asked, shortly after its appearance, how she liked *The Lady of the Lake*. She said, "Oh, I have not read it; Papa says there's nothing so bad for young people as reading bad poetry." (*Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 130. See also the *Life of Irving*, Vol. I, p. 444.)

[4] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. II, p. 94.

[5] *Correspondence of C. K. Sharpe*, Vol. I, p. 353.

[6] See *Marmion*, introduction to Canto III, and other passages noted by Adolphus in the *Letters to Heber*, p. 295. See also *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 198, and the passage in *Lockhart* (Vol. II, p. 132), in which James Ballantyne reports Scott as saying to him, "If you wish to speak of a real poet, Joanna Baillie is now the highest genius of our country."

[7] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 306.

felt grateful was Matthew Lewis, famed as the author of *The Monk*. Lewis was also something of a poet, and was really helpful to Scott in giving him advice on literary subjects. Though Scott perceived that Lewis's talents "would not stand much creaming"[1] he continued to regard him as one who had had high imagination and a "finer ear for rhythm than Byron's."

Scott felt that his own taste in respect to poetry became more rigorous as he grew older. In 1823 in a letter to Miss Baillie he commented on Mrs. Hemans as "somewhat too poetical for my taste—too many flowers, I mean, and too little fruit—but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman; for it is certain that when I was young I read verses of every kind with infinitely more indulgence, because with more pleasure than I can now do—the more shame for me now to refuse the complaisance which I have had so often to solicit."[2] Similarly he speaks in the preface to *Kenilworth* of having once been delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne: "There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in after-life." With these comments we may put Lockhart's sagacious remark: "His propensity to think too well of other men's works sprung, of course, mainly from his modesty and good nature; but the brilliancy of his imagination greatly sustained the delusion. It unconsciously gave precision to the trembling outline, and life and warmth to the vapid colours before him."[3] This and his kindness would account for the latter half of the observation made by his publisher: "I like well Scott's ain bairns—but heaven preserve me from those of his fathering."[4]

I have found no reference to Landor, a poet whom Southey and Wordsworth read with eagerness, but Mr. Forster makes this statement in his *Biography of Landor:* "Among Landor's papers I found a list, prepared by himself, of resemblances to passages of his own writing to be found in Scott's *Tales of the Crusaders*. There were several from *Gebir*. . . . The

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 359; also Vol. I, p. 255; and *Constable's Correspondence*, Vol. III, p. 300.
[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, p. 117.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 448.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 14.

poem had made a great impression on Scott, who read it at Southey's suggestion."[1] Forster also notes the fact that Southey, in a letter to Scott written in 1812, spoke very highly of Landor's *Count Julian.*[2] I am similarly unable to cite any comment by Scott on the writings of Lamb. Was it because Scott's genius clung to Scotland and Lamb's to London, that the two seemed so little to notice each other? It does seem odd that Scott never refers to the delightful *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.* At one time Lamb wrote to Sir Walter asking a contribution toward a fund that was being raised to help William Godwin out of pecuniary troubles, and Scott replied, through the artist Haydon, with a cheque for ten pounds and a pleasant message to Mr. Lamb, " whom I should be happy to see in Scotland, though I have not forgotten his metropolitan preference of houses to rocks, and citizens to wild rustics and highland men."[3] Hazlitt and Hunt were two other writers whose literary work Scott ignored.[4] This, as well as his neglect of Lamb's and DeQuincey's essays, may be due largely to the fact that he seldom read newspapers and magazines, and these writers were journalists and contributors to periodicals. Voracious reader as Scott was, he had to economize time somewhere, and the hours saved from papers could be given to books. We do find one or two references to these men as political writers. Scott hoped Lockhart would learn, as editor of the *Quarterly,* to despise petty adversaries, for " to take notice of such men as Hazlitt and Hunt in the *Quarterly* would be to introduce them into a world which is scarce conscious of their existence."[5]

[1] *Forster,* Vol. I, p. 84, note. [2] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 95.

[3] *Haydon's Correspondence,* Vol. I, p. 356.

[4] Hunt says Scott was interested in reading *The Story of Rimini.* See Hunt's *Autobiography,* Vol. I, p. 260.

[5] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 22. Scott wrote as follows to Lockhart after the appearance of *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries:* " Hunt has behaved like a hyena to Byron, whom he has dug up to girn and howl over him in the same breath." Mr. Lang makes this comment: " Leigh Hunt . . . had gone out of his way to insult Sir Walter and to make the most baseless insinuations against him. Scott probably never mentioned Leigh Hunt's name publicly in his life, and he refers to the insults neither in his correspondence nor in his *Journal.*" (Lang's *Life of Lockhart,* Vol. II, pp. 22 and 24.) Hunt evidently thought that Scott was partly respon-

Among novelists, those of Scott's contemporaries to whom he gave the highest praise were women. This is, however, to be expected, and it is natural to find Jane Austen receiving the highest praise of all; since Scott was emphatically not of the tribe of critics who are able to appreciate only one kind of novel or poem. Her novels seemed to grow upon him and he read them often. It was in connection with her "exquisite touch" that he was moved to reflect, in the words so often quoted from his *Journal*, "The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going."[1] Among the expressions of admiration which occur in his review of *Emma*,[2] Scott records a characteristic bit of protest in regard to the tendency of Miss Austen and other novelists to make prudence the guiding motive of all their favorite young women characters, especially in matters of the heart. He did not like this pushing out of Cupid to make way for so moderate a virtue as prudence; he thought that it is often good for young people to fall in love without regard to worldly considerations. Scott rated Miss Edgeworth nearly as high as Miss Austen, and hers is the added honor of having inspired the author of *Waverley* with a desire to emulate her power.[3] With these two novelists he associated Miss Ferrier, as well as the somewhat earlier writer, Fanny Burney.[4]

Aside from these women and Henry Mackenzie, perhaps the highest praise that Scott bestowed on any contemporary novel-

sible for the articles in *Blackwood* on the Cockney School. He says, "Unfortunately some of the knaves were not destitute of talent: the younger were tools of older ones who kept out of sight." (Hunt's *Lord Byron*, etc., Vol. I, p. 423.) In his *Autobiography*, Hunt says, "Sir Walter Scott confessed to Mr. Severn at Rome that the truth respecting Keats had prevailed." (Vol. II, p. 44.) Mr. Lang points out that though Colvin said of Scott (in his *Life of Keats*) "that he was in some measure privy to the Cockney School outrages seems certain," he afterwards recanted the statement. (In his edition of *Keats's Letters*, p. 60, note. See Lang's *Lockhart*, Vol. I, pp. 196–8.) Scott invited Lamb to Abbotsford when Lamb was looked upon as a leader of the Cockney School. (Lang's *Scott*, p. 52.)

[1] *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 155; *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, p. 476, and Vol. V, p. 380.

[2] *Quarterly*, October, 1815.

[3] Postscript to *Waverley*, and General Introduction.

[4] For references to the group of women novelists who were so successful in depicting manners, see the *Life of Charlotte Smith;* the Postscript to *Waverley;* the Introduction to *St. Ronan's Well; Journal*, Vol. I, p. 164.

ist was given to Cooper. Here, as in the case of Byron, Scott seemed to ignore the other writer's indebtedness to himself. He speaks, in the general preface to the Waverley Novels, of "that striking field in which Mr. Cooper has achieved so many triumphs"; and at another time calls him "the justly celebrated American novelist." In his *Journal* he comments on *The Red Rover*[1] and *The Prairie;*[2] *The Pilot* he recommends warmly in a letter to Miss Edgeworth.[3]

The personal relations between "the Scotch and American lions," as Scott called himself and Cooper, when they met in Parisian society in 1826,[4] had some interesting consequences. Cooper suggested to Scott that he try to secure for himself part of the profits arising from the publication of his works in America, by entering them as the property of some citizen. They finally concluded to substitute for this plan one suggested by Scott, which involved the writing by the Author of Waverley, of a letter addressed to Cooper, to be transmitted by him to some American publisher who would undertake the publication of an authorized edition of which half the profits should go to the author. Future works were to be sent over to this publisher in advance of their appearance in England. The letter was really an appeal to the justice of the American people, and contained an allusion to the publication of Irving's works in England according to a plan very similar to that proposed by Scott. But the scheme failed here in America, and apparently the letter was not made public until Cooper, irritated by the appearance in Lockhart's *Life of Scott* of Sir Walter's comments on his personal manner,[6] explained the affair (except the reason for dropping the plan), and published the corre-

[1] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 111. [2] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 116.
[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, 164.
[4] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 299; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 65.
[5] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 295; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 62.
[6] The reference as given by Lockhart is as follows: "This man, who has shown so much genius, has a good deal of the manners, or want of manners, peculiar to his countrymen." (*Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 62.) Cooper observes in regard to this point: "The manners of most Europeans strike us as exaggerated, while we appear cold to them. Sir Walter Scott was certainly so obliging as to say many flattering things to me, which I, as certainly, did not repay in kind. As Johnson said of his interview with George the Third, it was not for me to bandy compliments with my sover-

spondence in the *Knickerbocker Magazine* for April, 1838.[1] Later in the same year Cooper wrote a severe review of the biography of Scott, attacking his character in a way that seems absurdly exaggerated.[2] Yet Charles Sumner seems to have thought that Cooper made his points, and Mr. Lounsbury is inclined to agree with him.[3]

eign. At that time the diary was a sealed book to the world, and I did not know the importance he attached to such civilities." It is a pity that the transcriber of the passage in the *Journal* changed "manner," which was the word Scott wrote, to the more objectionable "manners." (*Journal*, Vol. I, p. 295.)

[1] Scott's letter was substantially as follows: "I have considered in all its bearings the matter which your kindness has suggested. Upon many former occasions I have been urged by my friends in America to turn to some advantage the sale of my writings in your country, and render that of pecuniary avail as an individual which I feel as the highest compliment as an author. I declined all these proposals, because the sale of this country produced me as much profit as I desired, and more—far more—than I deserved. But my late heavy losses have made my situation somewhat different, and have rendered it a point of necessity and even duty to neglect no means of making the sale of my works effectual to the extrication of my affairs, which can be honorably and honestly resorted to. If therefore Mr. Carey, or any other publishing gentleman of credit and character, should think it worth while to accept such an offer, I am willing to convey to him the exclusive right of publishing the *Life of Napoleon*, and my future works in America, making it always a condition, which indeed will be dictated by the publisher's own interest, that this monopoly shall not be used for the purpose of raising the price of the work to my American readers, but only for that of supplying the public at the usual terms. . . .

"At any rate, if what I propose should not be found of force to prevent piracy, I cannot but think from the generosity and justice of American feeling, that a considerable preference would be given in the market to the editions emanating directly from the publisher selected by the author, and in the sale of which the author had some interest.

"If the scheme shall altogether fail, it at least infers no loss, and therefore is, I think, worth the experiment. It is a fair and open appeal to the liberality, perhaps in some sort to the justice, of a great people; and I think I ought not in the circumstances to decline venturing upon it. I have done so manfully and openly, though not perhaps without some painful feelings, which however are more than compensated by the interest you have taken in this unimportant matter, of which I will not soon lose the recollection." (*Knickerbocker Magazine*, Vol. XI, p. 380 ff., April, 1838.)

[2] *Knickerbocker*, Vol. XII, p. 349 ff., October, 1838.

[3] In a letter written in January, 1839, Sumner said, speaking of Cooper's article, "I think a proper castigation is applied to the vulgar minds of Scott and Lockhart." (See *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, by Edward L. Pierce, Vol. II, p. 38; and Lounsbury's *Cooper*, p. 160.)

One of the milder strictures in Cooper's review was as follows: "As he was ambitious of, so was he careful to preserve, his personal popularity, of which we have a striking proof in the studied kindnesses that for years were laid before this country in deeds and words, as compared with his real acts and sentiments toward America and Americans which are now revealed in his letters." A passage which doubtless roused Cooper's ire may be quoted. Of the Americans Scott said, in a letter to Miss Edgeworth, "They are a people possessed of very considerable energy, quickened and brought into eager action by an honourable love of their country and pride in their institutions; but they are as yet rude in their ideas of social intercourse, and totally ignorant, speaking generally, of all the art of good breeding, which consists chiefly in a postponement of one's own petty wishes or comforts to those of others. By rude questions and observations, an absolute disrespect to other people's feelings, and a ready indulgence of their own, they make one feverish in their company, though perhaps you may be ashamed to confess the reason. But this will wear off and is already wearing away. Men, when they have once got benches, will soon fall into the use of cushions. They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling."[1]

Scott liked George Ticknor,[2] and he called Washington Irving "one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances I have made this many a day."[3] In later life he congratulated him-

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, pp. 163–4. [2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 262.

[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 131, note; *Fam. Let.*, Vol. I, p. 440. "Walter Scott was the first transatlantic author to bear witness to the merit of Knickerbocker," wrote P. M. Irving in his *Life of Washington Irving*. Henry Brevoort presented Scott with a copy of the second edition in 1813, and received this reply: "I beg you to accept my best thanks for the uncommon degree of entertainment which I have received from the most excellently jocose history of New York. I am sensible that as a stranger to American parties and politics I must lose much of the concealed satire of the piece, but I must own that looking at the simple and obvious meaning only, I have never read anything so closely resembling the style of Dean Swift, as the annals of Diedrich Knickerbocker. . . . I think too there are passages which indicate that the author possesses powers of a different kind, and has some touches which remind me much of Sterne." (*Life*

self on having from the first foreseen Irving's success.[1] When we remember also that Scott quotes from Poor Richard,[2] refers to Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*,[3] and speaks of "the American Brown" as one whose novels might be reprinted in England,[4] we ought probably to conclude that his acquaintance with our literature was as comprehensive as could have been expected.

Among continental writers belonging to his period, Goethe was very properly the one for whom Scott had the strongest admiration. But we find comparatively few references to his reading the great German after the early period of translation. Throughout Lockhart's *Life of Scott* it is evident that the biographer had a more thorough acquaintance with Goethe than had Scott, and it seems probable that the younger man influenced the elder in his judgment on *Faust* and on Goethe's character. In the Introduction to *Quentin Durward* we find an interesting comment on Goethe's success in creating a really wicked Mephistopheles, who escapes the noble dignity that Milton and Byron gave to their pictures of Satan. Goethe and Scott exchanged letters once in 1827,[5] and it was a personal grief to Sir Walter that the German poet's death prevented a visit Scott proposed to make him in 1832. In *Anne of Geierstein* Goethe is called "an author born to arouse the slumber-

of Irving, Vol. I, p. 240.) When, in 1819, Irving needed money, he wrote to Scott for advice about publishing the *Sketch Book* in England. "Scott was the only literary man," he says, "to whom I felt that I could talk about myself and my petty concerns with the confidence and freedom that I would to an old friend—nor was I deceived. From the first moment that I mentioned my work to him in a letter, he took a decided and effective interest in it, and has been to me an invaluable friend." (Vol. I, p. 456.) At this time Scott asked Irving to accept the editorship of a political newspaper in Edinburgh, an offer which Irving of course refused. (*Fam. Let.*, Vol. II, p. 60; *Life of Irving*, Vol. I, pp. 441–2, and Vol. III, pp. 272–3.) Scott called the *Sketch Book* "positively beautiful." He was by some people supposed to be the author. In this connection it was said of him that his "very numerous disguises," and his "well-known fondness for literary masquerading, seem to have gained him the advantage of being suspected as the author of every distinguished work that is published." (Letter by Lady Lyttleton, in *Life of Irving*, Vol. II, p. 21.)

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. III, p. 131; *Life of Irving*, Vol. I, p. 240.

[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, p. 161.

[3] *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, Letter II.

[4] *Constable's Correspondence*, Vol. III, p. 199.

[5] *Lockhart*, Vol. V, pp. 100–104.

ing fame of his country";[1] and in the *Journal* Scott characterizes him as "the Ariosto at once and almost the Voltaire of Germany."[2] The suggestion for the character of Fenella in *Peveril of the Peak* was taken from Goethe, as we learn by Scott's acknowledgment in the Introduction. Another German from whom Scott borrowed a suggestion—this time for the unlucky "White Lady of Avenel"—was the Baron de la Motte Fouqué. Scott was evidently interested in his work, though he thought Fouqué sometimes used such a profusion of historical and antiquarian lore that readers would find it difficult to follow the narrative.[3] Sir Walter asked his son to tell the Baroness de la Motte Fouqué that he had been much interested in her writings and those of the Baron, and added, "It will be civil, for folks like to know that they are known and respected beyond the limits of their own country."[4]

In the literary circles of Paris Scott more than once experienced the pleasure of finding himself "known and respected" by foreigners,[5] and he had intimate relations with men of letters in London. On one of his visits there he saw Byron almost every morning for some time, at the house of Murray the publisher. In Edinburgh society Scott was naturally a prominent figure, being noted for his fund of anecdote and his superior gifts in presiding at dinners. But however much his kindly personal feeling is reflected in his comments on the literary work of his friends, he was too well-balanced to assume anything of the patronizing tone that such success as his might have made natural to another sort of man. His fellow-poets thought him a delightful person whom they liked so much that they could almost forgive the preposterous success of his facile and unimportant poetry.

[1] Vol. I, p. 371.

[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 359; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 100. See also *Journal,* Vol. II, pp. 483–4.

[3] Review of Hoffmann's novels, *Foreign Quarterly Review,* July, 1827.

[4] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 19.

[5] M. Maigron says, speaking of the vogue of Scott in France: "On peut affirmer même que, de 1820 à 1830, aucun nom français ne fut en France aussi connu et aussi glorieux." (*Le Roman Historique à l'Époque Romantique,* p. 99. See also pp. 100–133.)

His full-blooded enjoyment of life and literature tempered without obscuring his critical instinct, and though he was "willing to be pleased by those who were desirous to give pleasure,"[1] he noted the weak points of men to whose power he gladly paid tribute. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Byron, whom he classed as the great English poets of his time, may, with the exception of Southey, be given the places he assigned to them. In regard to Byron, Scott expressed a critical estimate that the public is only now getting ready to accept after a long period of depreciating Byron's genius. The men whose work Scott judged fairly and sympathetically represent widely different types. With some of them he was connected by the new impulse that they were imparting to English poetry, but he was so close to the transition period that he could look backward to his predecessors with no sense of strangeness. He was never inclined to quarrel with the "erroneous system" of a poem which he really liked. His comments on Byron's *Darkness* suggest that if he had read more than he did of Shelley and others among his younger contemporaries he might have found much to reprehend, but he held that "we must not limit poetical merit to the class of composition which exactly suits one's own particular taste."[2] Among novelists even less than among poets can we trace a "school" to which he paid special allegiance. He read and enjoyed all sorts of good stories, growing in this respect more catholic in his tastes, though perhaps more severe in his standards, as he grew older.

In speaking of Scott's relations with his contemporaries, we must especially remember his ardent interest in those realities of life which he considered greater than the greatest books. In one of his reviews he laid stress on the merit of writing on contemporary events,[3] and he seemed to think there was too little

[1] The phrase is quoted from Scott's article on the *Life and Works of John Home,* in which it is applied to Home's critical work. The same idea occurs frequently in Scott's books, as indicating one of the finest graces of life. It was one which Sir Walter was foremost in practicing in all his social relations.

[2] He was talking about Pope. See the *Recollections,* by R. P. Gillies, *Fraser's,* xii: 253 (Sept., 1835).

[3] Review of *The Battles of Talavera, Quarterly,* November, 1809.

of such celebration. There are many evidences of his great admiration for those of his contemporaries who were men of action, but it is sufficient to remember that the only man in whose presence Scott felt abashed was the Duke of Wellington, for he counted that famous commander the greatest man of his time.

CHAPTER V

Scott as a Critic of His Own Work

Lack of dogmatism about his own work—Harmony between his talents and his tastes—His conviction of the value of spontaneity and abundance—Merits of a rapid meter—Greater care necessary in verse writing a reason why he turned to prose—His attitude in regard to revision—Modesty about his own work—His opinion of the popular judgment—Importance of novelty—Rivalry with Byron—Scott's attempts to keep ahead of his imitators—Devices to secure novelty—His resolution to write history—Historical motives of his novels—His comments on the use of historical material—His verdict in regard to his descriptive abilities and methods—Lack of emphasis on the ethical aspect of his work—His judgment on the position of the novel in literature.

"Scott is invariably his own best critic," says Mr. Andrew Lang.[1] Of this Scott was not himself in the least convinced, and when we recall how, to please his printer, James Ballantyne, he tacked on a last scene to *Rokeby,* resuscitated the dead Athelstane in *Ivanhoe,* and eliminated the main motive of *St. Ronan's Well,* we wish he had been more uniformly inclined to trust his own critical judgment.

He never scheduled the qualities of his own genius. A man who could sincerely say what he did about literary immortality would not be apt to develop any dogma in regard to his artistic achievement. "Let me please my own generation," he said, "and let those that come after us judge of their taste and my performances as they please; the anticipation of their neglect or censure will affect me very little."[2] His opinions about his own work are to be deduced largely from casual remarks scattered through his letters and journals. His introductions to his novels, in the *Opus Magnum,* are valuable sources, however, and the "Epistle" preceding *The Fortunes of Nigel* is a mine of material, though, unlike the later introductions, it was written "according to the trick," when he was

[1] Editor's Introduction to *Montrose,* Border edition of the Waverley Novels.

[2] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 125.

still preserving his anonymity. We have an article which he wrote for the *Quarterly* on two of his own books, the review of *Tales of My Landlord*.[1] His criticism of the work of other people is also very helpful in this connection, since from it we may learn what qualities he wished to find in poetry and in the novel, as well as in history, biography, and criticism, the fields in which he did much, though less famous work.

The student of his criticism is struck at once by the fact that the qualities which Scott particularly admired in literature were those for which he was himself preëminent. Yet he cannot be accused, as Poe may be, of constructing a theory that those types of art were greatest which he found himself most skilful in exemplifying. Scott's nature was of that most efficient kind that enables a man to do such things as he likes to see done. We cannot argue that he was incapable of attending to minute niceties and on this account chose to emphasize the large qualities of literature. For notwithstanding that lack of delicacy which characterized his physical senses and which we might therefore conclude would affect his literary discernment, we have among his small poems some that show his power, occasionally at least, to satisfy the most fastidious critic of detail. Evidently he could write in more than one style, and though the style he used most is undoubtedly that which was most natural to him, it was also that which he thought, on other grounds than the character of his own talents, best worth while. Yet he had so little vanity in regard to his own work that he could hardly understand his success, though it depended on those very qualities which, in other authors, excited his utmost admiration.

One of his fundamental opinions about literary work was that to write much and with abundant spontaneity is better than to polish minutely. Over and over again we find this idea expressed, most noticeably in connection with the poet

[1] *Quarterly*, January, 1817. Scott evidently wrote this article chiefly for the purpose of defending the historical accuracy of *Old Mortality*. He also wished to show that *The Black Dwarf* was founded on fact; and he devoted some space, as will appear in the passage quoted below (pp. 111–112), to a discussion of the artistic aspects of these and the earlier Waverley novels.

Campbell, whom Scott could scarcely forgive for making so little use of his poetical gifts. He applauded the much-criticised fertility of Byron, whose genius was in that respect akin to his own. "I never knew name or fame burn brighter by over-chary keeping of it,"[1] Scott said. The greatest writers, he observed, have been the most voluminous. His position was one that could be fortified by inductive reasoning, contrasting in this respect with theories which seem plausible only until they are tested by actual facts, as, for example, Poe's idea that long poems lose effectiveness by their length. But perhaps Scott did not sufficiently take into account the circular nature of his argument; for since the world has refused to consider the men very great who "never spoke out," the truth is not so much that a great man ought to write copiously as that if a man does not write copiously he will not be counted great. Scott seemed to think it was mere wilfulness that prevented a man of such gifts as Campbell's from writing abundantly.

The corresponding disadvantages of rapid composition were of course evident to him. From the first appearance of the *Lay* to the end of his career he lamented his inability to plan a story in an orderly manner and follow out the scheme; he admitted also that "the misfortune of writing fast is that one cannot at the same time write concisely."[2] Of *Marmion* he told Southey, "I had not time to write the poem shorter."[3]

His grief on these points seems qualified, however, by a conviction that he could not write with deliberation and method and still produce the effect of vivacious spontaneity. He thought Fielding was almost the only novelist who had thoroughly succeeded in combining these various admirable qualities,[4] and he said in this connection, "To demand equal correctness and felicity in those who may follow in the track of that illustrious novelist, would be to fetter too much the power of giving pleasure, by surrounding it with penal rules; since of this sort of light literature it may be especially said—*tout*

[1] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 269.
[2] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 96.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 276.
[4] Introductory epistle to *Nigel*; *Fam. Let.*, Vol. I, p. 28.

genre est permis, hors le genre ennuyeux."[1] "To confess to you the truth," says the "Author" in the Introductory Epistle to *Nigel*, "the works and passages in which I have succeeded, have uniformly been written with the greatest rapidity; and when I have seen some of these placed in opposition with others, and commended as more highly finished, I could appeal to pen and standish, that the parts in which I have come feebly off were by much the more laboured." He attempted to write *Rokeby* with great care, but threw the first version into the fire because he concluded that he had "corrected the spirit out of it, as a lively pupil is sometimes flogged into a dunce by a severe schoolmaster."[2] He was better satisfied with the result when he resumed his pen in his "old Cossack manner."[3] Similarly he writes of John Home's tragedy, *Douglas*, that the finest scene was, "we learn with pleasure but without surprise," unchanged from the first draft;[4] and elsewhere he speaks of the greater chance for popularity of the "bold, decisive, but light-touched strain of poetry or narrative in literary composition," over the "more highly-wrought performance."[5]

A good exposition of Scott's real opinion in regard to his own style is to be found in his review of *Tales of My Landlord*. Some parts of the article were probably inserted by his friend William Erskine, but the section I quote bears unmistakable evidence that it was written by the author himself, for it expresses that combined reprobation and approval of his style which is amusingly characteristic of him. He says: "Our author has told us that it was his object to present a series of scenes and characters connected with Scotland in its past and present state, and we must own that his stories are so slightly constructed as to remind us of the showman's thread with which he draws up his pictures and presents them successively to the eye of the spectator. . . . Against this slovenly indifference we have already remonstrated, and we again enter our

[1] Introduction to the *Monastery*.

[2] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 258.

[3] *Rokeby*, Canto VI, stanza 26; *Waverley*, Vol. II, pp. 399–400; *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 117; *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, pp. 447–8.

[4] Review of the *Life and Works of John Home*, *Quarterly*, June, 1827.

[5] Review of Southey's *Life of Bunyan*, *Quarterly*, October, 1830.

protest. . . . We are the more earnest in this matter, because it seems that the author errs chiefly from carelessness. There may be something of system in it, however, for we have remarked, that with an attention which amounts even to affectation, he has avoided the common language of narrative, and thrown his story, as much as possible, into a dramatic shape. In many cases this has added greatly to the effect, by keeping both the actors and action continually before the reader, and placing him, in some measure, in the situation of an audience at a theater, who are compelled to gather the meaning of the scene from what the dramatis personae say to each other, and not from any explanation addressed immediately to themselves. But though the author gain this advantage, and thereby compel the reader to think of the personages of the novel and not of the writer, yet the practice, especially pushed to the extent we have noticed, is a principal cause of the flimsiness and incoherent texture of which his greatest admirers are compelled to complain."[1]

Lockhart points out that the fruit of Scott's study of Dryden may have been to fortify his opinion as to what the greatness of literature really consists in, and applies to Scott himself some of the phrases used in the characterization of the earlier poet. "'Rapidity of conception, a readiness of expressing every idea, without losing anything by the way'; 'perpetual animation and elasticity of thought'; and language 'never laboured, never loitering, never (in Dryden's own phrase) cursedly confined,'" are set over against "pointed and nicely turned lines, sedulous study, and long and repeated correction and revision," and are pronounced the superior virtues.[2] The concluding paragraph of Scott's review of a poem on the Battle of Talavera exemplifies his use of this doctrine. "We have shunned, in the present instance," he says, "the unpleasant task of pointing out and dwelling upon individual inaccuracies. There are several hasty expressions, flat lines, and deficient rhymes, which prove to us little more than that the composition was a hurried one. These, in a poem of a different description, we should have thought it our duty to point

[1] *Quarterly*, January, 1817. [2] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, pp. 7–8.

out to the notice of the author. But after all it is the spirit of a poet that we consider as demanding our chief attention; and upon its ardour or rapidity must finally hinge our applause or condemnation."[1]

Scott's opinions about meters reflect the same taste. He persuaded himself, when he was writing *The Lady of the Lake,* that the eight-syllable line is "more congenial to the English language—more favourable to narrative poetry at least—than that which has been commonly termed heroic verse,"[2] and he proceeded to show that the first half-dozen lines of Pope's *Iliad* were each "bolstered out" with a superfluous adjective. "The case is different in descriptive poetry," he added, "because there epithets, if they are happily selected, are rather to be sought after than avoided. . . . But if in narrative you are frequently compelled to tag your substantives with adjectives, it must frequently happen that you are forced upon those that are merely commonplaces." He mentions other beauties of his favorite verse,—the opportunities for variation by double rhyme and by occasionally dropping a syllable, and the correspondence between the length of line and our natural intervals between punctuation,—but gives as his final excuse for using it his "better knack at this 'false gallop' of verse." The argument is ingenious enough, but his analysis of heroic verse has only a limited application, and his last reason probably was, as he was candid enough to admit, the most weighty. George Ellis replied to his defence thus: "I don't think, after all the eloquence with which you plead for your favourite metre, that you really like it from any other motive than that *sainte paresse*—that delightful indolence—which induces one to delight in those things which we can do with the least fatigue."[3] This seems hardly a fair return for the poet's appeal to Ellis in one of the epistles of *Marmion:*[4]

> "Come listen! bold in thy applause,
> The bard shall scorn pedantic laws."

Another introduction in the same poem is given up to a justi-

[1] *Quarterly,* November, 1809.
[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 128.
[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 129.
[4] Epistle prefixed to Canto V.

fication of the author's "unconfined" style, on the score of his love for the wild songs of his own country and the freedom of his early training.[1]

Scott practically never rewrote his prose, and the result gave Hazlitt opportunity to say:[2] "We should think the writer could not possibly read the manuscript after he has once written it, or overlook the press."[3] His habit of carrying two trains of thought on together was also responsible for slips in diction and syntax. An amanuensis working for him noticed this peculiarity, and Scott said in his *Journal:* "There must be two currents of ideas going on in my mind at the same time. . . . I always laugh when I hear people say, Do one thing at once. I have done a dozen things at once all my life."[4]

But the making of poetry required more attention. "Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over,"[5] he said, and one is moved to wonder whether the distaste for writing poetry,

[1] Epistle prefixed to Canto III.

[2] Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age,* art. *Sir Walter Scott;* see *Letters to Heber,* p. 75 ff.

[3] It is hard to say just how much he accomplished by the proof-reading, which, to judge by his Journal, he habitually performed. He wrote to Kirkpatrick Sharpe in 1809, after seeing a new number of the *Quarterly:* "I am a little disconcerted with the appearance of one or two of my own articles, which I have had no opportunity to revise in proof." (*Sharpe's Correspondence,* Vol. I, p. 370.) Lockhart gives an interesting sample of a sheet of Scott's poetry tentatively revised by Ballantyne and reworked by the author. (*Lockhart,* Vol. III, pp. 32–5.) It is certain that Ballantyne made many suggestions, some of which Scott accepted and some of which he summarily rejected. In Hogg's *Domestic Manners of Scott* we find the following account of what the printer said when Hogg reported that Sir Walter was to correct some proofs for him: "He correct them for you! Lord help you and him both! I assure you if he had nobody to correct after him, there would be a bonny song through the country. He is the most careless and incorrect writer that ever was born, for a voluminous and popular writer, and as for sending a proof sheet to him, we may as well keep it in the office. He never heeds it. . . . He will never look at either your proofs or his own, unless it be for a few minutes amusement" (pp. 242–3). When he wrote to Miss Baillie that he had read the proofs of a play of hers which was being published in Edinburgh, he added, "but this will not ensure their being altogether correct, for in despite of great practice, Ballantyne insists I have a bad eye." (*Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 173.)

[4] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 79; also 234 and 239; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, pp. 116 and 240.

[5] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 117; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 448.

that he professed about 1822, arose largely from a growing aversion to what he probably considered extreme care in composition.[1] A series of three comments on his own poetry may be given to illustrate his widely varying moods in regard to it. They are all taken from letters written not far from the time when *Marmion* was published. "As for poetry, it is very little labour to me; indeed 'twere pity of my life should I spend much time on the light and loose sort of poetry which alone I can pretend to write."[2] "I believe no man now alive writes more rapidly than I do (no great recommendation), but I never think of making verses till I have a sufficient stock of poetical ideas to supply them."[3] "If I ever write another poem, I am determined to make every single couplet of it as perfect as my uttermost care and attention can possibly effect."[4] In spite of this momentary resolution to take more pains with his next poem, he was unable to do so when the time came; or if, as in the case of *Rokeby* he did make the attempt, the results seemed to him unsatisfactory. Yet verse required much more careful finishing than prose, even when it was written by Scott, and this fact has been too little emphasized in discussions of his transition from verse to prose romances.

Scott's temperamental aversion to revising what he had once written was evidently sanctioned by his literary creed. Near the end of his life he recalled how he had submitted one of his earliest poems to the criticism of several acquaintances, with the consequence that after he had adopted their suggestions, hardly a line remained unaltered, and yet the changes failed to satisfy the critics.[5] He said: "This unexpected result, after about a fortnight's anxiety, led me to adopt a rule from which I have seldom departed during more than thirty years of literary life. When a friend whose judgment I respect has decided and upon good advisement told me that a manuscript was worth nothing, or at least possessed no redeeming qualities sufficient to atone for its defects, I have generally cast it aside; but I am little in the custom of paying attention to minute criticisms

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. IV, pp. 2 and 391.
[2] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. I, p. 72.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 101.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 113.
[5] Essay on *Imitations of the Ancient Ballad.*

or of offering such to any friend who may do me the honour to consult me. I am convinced that, in general, in removing even errors of a trivial or venial kind, the character of originality is lost, which, upon the whole, may be that which is most valuable in the production." This position appears doubly significant when we remember that it was assumed by a man who had only the slightest possible amount of paternal jealousy in regard to his writings.[1]

Scott did not always adhere to this resolution, for he did accept criticism and make alterations, more in compliance with the wishes of James Ballantyne, his friend and printer, than to meet the desires of anyone else. He considered that Ballantyne represented the ordinary popular taste, and he was ready to make some sacrifice of his own judgment in order to satisfy his public. He sent the conclusion of *Rokeby* to Ballantyne with this note: "Dear James,—I send you this out of deference to opinions so strongly expressed, but still retaining my own, that it spoils one effect without producing another."

When one of his books was adversely criticised by the public he received the judgment with open mind, and often analyzed it with much acuteness. The introduction to *The Monastery* is a good example of frank, though not servile, submission to the decree of public opinion. That he was deeply impressed with his blunder in managing the White Lady of Avenel may be surmised from the fact that in several later discussions of the effect of supernatural apparitions in novels, he emphasized the necessity of keeping them sufficiently infrequent to preserve an atmosphere of mystery. Of *The Monastery* he said: "I agree with the public in thinking the work not very interesting; but it was written with as much care as the others—

[1] A friend of Scott's once wrote to him, "You are the only author I ever yet knew to whom one might speak plain about the faults found with his works." (*Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 282.) He took great pains, contrary to his usual custom, in revising and correcting the *Malachi Malagrowther* papers, but these were argumentative and in an altogether different class from his poems and novels; and besides he felt a special responsibility in writing upon a public matter "far more important than anything referring to [his] fame or fortune alone." (*Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 460.)

that is, with no care at all."[1] But sometimes he felt inclined to rebel against a popular verdict, as when Norna, in *The Pirate,* was said to be a mere copy of Meg Merrilies.[2]

In his later days he grew more and more unsure of himself, as he felt compelled to work at his topmost speed. His *Journal* for 1829 has the following record in regard to a review he was writing: "I began to warm in my gear, and am about to awake the whole controversy of Goth and Celt. I wish I may not make some careless blunders."[3] The criticisms of "J. B." became more frequent and more irritating to him as he felt a growing inability to achieve precision in details.[4] When Lockhart pointed out some lapses in his style, he wrote in his *Journal,* "Well! I will try to remember all this, but after all I write grammar as I speak, to make my meaning known, and a solecism in point of composition, like a Scotch word in speaking, is indifferent to me."[5] Until he felt his powers failing, he was for the most part at once good-natured and independent in his manner of receiving criticism. Whether or not he agreed with the opinion expressed, he usually thought that what he had once written might best stand, though he might be influenced in later work by the advice that had been given.[6]

"I am sensible that if there be anything good about my poetry or prose either," Scott wrote, in a passage that has often been quoted, "it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors and young people of bold and active disposition."[7] I have tried to show that this quality was one which he not only enjoyed, in his own work and in that of other writers, but that as a critic he very seriously approved of it.

Yet in spite of his belief that the greatest literature is not the result of slow and painful labor, it was probably the ease with which he wrote which led him to undervalue his own work. However we may account for it, he found difficulty in

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 379. [2] Introduction to the *Pirate.*

[3] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 250.

[4] This was, of course, an effect of overwork and disease. Irving quotes Scott as saying: "It is all nonsense to tell a man that his mind is not affected, when his body is in this state." (*Irving's Life,* Vol. II, p. 459.)

[5] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 181. [6] See *Lockhart,* Vol. II, pp. 265–6.

[7] *Journal,* Vol. I, pp. 212–13; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 13.

regarding himself as a great author.[1] When this modesty of his came into conflict with the other opinion that he had always been inclined to hold—that the popularity of books is a test of their merit—the result is amusing. He was impelled at times to utter contemptuous words about the foolishness of the public, and of course he could not help being moved also in the other direction—to believe there was more in his writings than he had realized. In one mood he said, "I thank God I can write ill enough for the present taste";[2] and "I have very little respect for that dear *publicum* whom I am doomed to amuse, like Goody Trash in *Bartholomew Fair,* with rattles and gingerbread; and I should deal very uncandidly with those who may read my confessions were I to say I knew a public worth caring for, or capable of distinguishing the nicer beauties of composition. They weigh good and evil qualities by the pound. Get a good name and you may write trash. Get a bad one and you may write like Homer, without pleasing a single reader."[3] Looking back from the end of his career to the time when *The Lady of the Lake* was in the height of its success, he wrote: "It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful or so superabundantly candid as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much

[1] See *Familiar Letters,* Vol. II, p. 309; *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 216; Vol. IV, pp. 128 and 498; Vol. V, pp. 128, 412, 448.

[2] *Correspondence of C. K. Sharpe,* Vol. I, p. 352.

[3] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 276. In the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1808 (published 1810) is an article on the *Living Poets of Great Britain,* which if not written by Scott was evidently influenced by him. Speaking of Southey, Campbell and Scott, the writer says: "Were we set to classify their respective admirers we should be apt to say that those who feel poetry most enthusiastically prefer Southey; those who try it by the most severe rules admire Campbell; while the general mass of readers prefer to either the Border Poet. In this arrangement we should do Mr. Scott no injustice, because we assign to him in the number of suffrages what we deny him in their value." He once wrote to Miss Baillie, "No one can both eat his cake and have his cake, and I have enjoyed too extensive popularity in this generation to be entitled to draw long-dated bills upon the applause of the next." (*Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 173.) But in the Introductory Epistle to *Nigel* he said, "It has often happened that those who have been best received in their own time have also continued to be acceptable to posterity. I do not think so ill of the present generation as to suppose that its present favour necessarily infers future condemnation."

higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public as receiving that from partiality which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement."[1] The perfect respectability of these remarks tempts the reader to set over against them this earlier observation by the same writer in the guise of Chrystal Croftangry, "One thing I have learned in life—never to speak sense when nonsense will answer the purpose as well."[2]

Whatever Scott might think of the worth of public admiration, he frankly attempted to write what would be popular. He had none of the feeling which has characterized many very interesting men of letters, that the desire for self-expression is the one motive of the author; his personal literary impulse, on the contrary, was always guided by the thought of the audience whom he was addressing. "No one shall find me rowing against the stream," says the "Author" in the Introductory Epistle to *Nigel*. "I care not who knows it—I write for general amusement; and though I will never aim at popularity by what I think unworthy means, I will not, on the other hand, be pertinacious in the defence of my own errors against the voice of the public." Of his last "apoplectic books," he wrote, "I am ashamed, for the first time in my life, of the two novels, but since the pensive public have taken them, there is no more to be said but to eat my pudding and to hold my tongue."[3] Early in his career he seems to have felt that he could make a good deal of money by writing, if he should wish.[4] Towards the end he said, "I know that no literary speculation ever succeeded with me but where my own works were concerned; and that, on the other hand, these have rarely failed."[5]

The popularity of his own books was so great that they required a special category. He seemed to be incapable of ascribing their success to extraordinary excellence, and he settled down to the opinion that it was simply their novelty that

[1] Introduction to the *Lady of the Lake; Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 130.
[2] Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate*.
[3] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 473.
[4] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 355.
[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 164.

the public cared for. The enthusiastic welcome given him by the Irish when he visited Dublin caused him to say in one of his letters, "Were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play,[1] that I had been kept back, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect."[2]

He assumed that he had studied popular taste enough to have some knowledge of its shiftings, so that he might "set every sail towards the breeze."[3] "I may be mistaken," he once wrote, "but I do think the tale of Elspat M'Tavish in my bettermost manner, but J. B. roars for chivalry. He does not quite understand that everything may be overdone in this world, or sufficiently estimate the necessity of novelty. The Highlanders have been off the field now for some time."[4] His comment on *Ivanhoe* was still more emphatic. "Novelty is what this giddy-paced time demands imperiously, and I certainly studied as much as I could to get out of the old beaten track, leaving those who like to keep the road, which I have rutted pretty well."[5]

Believing from the beginning of his career that novelty was the chief merit of his work, he was prepared to live up to his principles. So it was that when he was "beaten" by Byron in metrical romances, he dropped with hardly a regret, so far as we can judge, the kind of writing in which he had attained such remarkable popularity, and turned to another kind. "Since one line has failed, we must just stick to something else," he remarked, calmly.[6] This was when the small sales of *The Lord of the Isles* as compared with the earlier poems warned Scott and his publisher in a very tangible way that the field had been captured by Byron. At this time *Waverley* was in the market and *Guy Mannering* was in process of composition. Though it was to his poetry that he chose to give his

[1] See the speech of Humphry Gubbin, in *The Tender Husband,* Act I, Sc. 2.

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 297; see also *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 55.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, pp. 104 and 124.

[4] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 222; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 18.

[5] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 350.

[6] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 508.

name, Scott had little reason to feel forlorn, as the sale of the novels from the very beginning was a pretty effective consolation for any possible hurt to his vanity. He could have owned them as his at any moment, had he chosen to do so. He did not read criticisms of his books, but was satisfied, as one of his friends observed, "to accept the intense avidity with which his novels are read, the enormous and continued sale of his works, as a sufficient commendation of them."[1] In the case of Byron, as always when the public approved the works of one of his brother authors, he considered the popular judgment right.

Scott did not altogether stop writing poetry, however, as is sometimes supposed. *The Field of Waterloo* and *Harold the Dauntless* were both written after this time; and the mottoes and lyrics in the novels compose a delightful body of verse. The fact seems to be that he lost zest for writing long poems, partly because of the favor with which Byron's poems were received, and his own consequent feeling of inferiority in poetic composition; partly because of his discovery of the greater ease with which he could write prose, and the greater scope it gave him. The more ambitious attempts among the poems which he wrote after 1814 are comparative failures. But the poetry in his nature prevented him from entirely giving over the composition of verse, and he found real delight in the occasional writing of short pieces that required no continued effort. They were usually made to be used in the novels, for after the publication of *Guy Mannering* novel-writing became specifically Scott's occupation.[2]

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 229.

[2] When Constable was proposing to publish the poetry of the novels separately, Scott wrote to him that it was beyond his own power to distinguish what was original from what was borrowed, and suggested the following Advertisement for the book:

"We believe by far the greater part of the poetry interspersed through these novels to be original compositions by the author. At the same time the reader will find passages which are quoted from other authors, and may probably debit more of these than our more limited reading has enabled us to ascertain. Indeed, it is our opinion that some of the following poetry is neither entirely original nor altogether borrowed, but consists in some instances of passages from other authors, which the author has not hesitated to alter considerably, either to supply defects of his own memory, or to adapt the quotation more explicitly and aptly to the matter in hand." (*Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, pp. 222–3.)

The price of his success in any direction was that he was unable to keep his field to himself. Having set a fashion, he was more than once annoyed by the crowd who wrote in his style and made him feel the necessity of striking out a new line.[1] It was comparatively easy for the vigorous man who wrote *Waverley,* but in the end, when through his losses he was more than ever obliged to hit the popular taste, to feel that he must find a new style seemed a hard fate. Yet he meant to be beforehand in the race. This is the record in his *Journal:* "Hard pressed as I am by these imitators, who must put the thing out of fashion at last, I consider, like a fox at his last shifts, whether there be a way to dodge them—some new device to throw them off, and have a mile or two of free ground while I have legs and wind left to use it. There is one way to give novelty: to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story. But woe's me! that requires thought, consideration—the writing out a regular plan or plot —above all, the adhering to one—which I never can do, for the ideas rise as I write, and bear such a disproportioned extent to that which each occupied at the first concoction, that (cocksnowns!) I shall never be able to take the trouble; and yet to make the world stare, and gain a new march ahead of them all! Well, something we still will do."[2]

By an easy extension of his principle, he came to believe that novelty would always succeed for a time. The opinion is expressed often in his reviews, and in his journal and letters is applied to his own work. So it was that when any one of his books seemed partially to fail with the public, his immediate impulse was to look for something new to be done.[3] One of his schemes was a work on popular superstitions, projected when *Quentin Durward* seemed to be falling flat; but the success of the novel made the immediate execution of the plan unnecessary.[4]

[1] "I have taught nearly a hundred gentlemen to fence very nearly, if not altogether, as well as myself," he said. (*Journal,* Vol. I, p. 167. See also pp. 273–5.)

[2] *Journal,* Vol. I, pp. 275–6; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 45.

[3] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, pp. 322 and 492; Vol. V, p. 186.

[4] *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, p. 110.

It was largely his desire to secure variety that encouraged him to undertake historical writing. He had also a theory about how history should be written, and so he felt that the novelty would consist in something more than the fact that the Author of Waverley had taken a new line. He wished, as Thackeray did later when he proposed to write a history of the Age of Queen Anne, to use in an avowedly serious book the material with which he had stored his imagination; and he believed he could present it with a vivacity that was not characteristic of professional historians. The success of the first series of *Tales of a Grandfather* served to confirm the opinion he had expressed about them,—"I care not who knows it, I think well of them. Nay, I will hash history with anybody, be he who he will."[1]

Scott had a very just sense of the value of his great stores of information. He did say that he would give one half his knowledge if so he might put the other half upon a well-built foundation,[2] but as years went on he learned to use with ease the accumulations of knowledge which in his youth had proved often unwieldy; and more than once he congratulated himself that he beat his imitators by possessing historical and antiquarian lore which they could only acquire by "reading up."[3] Though he testified that in the beginning of his first novel he described his own education, he could hardly apply to himself what is there said of Waverley, that, "While he was thus permitted to read only for the gratification of his amusement, he foresaw not that he was losing forever the opportunity of acquiring habits of firm and assiduous application, of gaining the art of controlling, directing, and concentrating the powers of his mind for earnest investigation."[4] It was otherwise with Scott himself. The result of the wide and desultory reading of his youth, acting upon a remarkably strong memory, was to put him into the position, as he says, of "an ignorant gamester, who kept a good hand until he knew how to play it."[5] So it was that he said of those who followed his lead in writing his-

[1] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 106, and *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 162.
[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, pp. 33–4.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 259.
[4] *Waverley*, Vol. I, pp. 112–3. See also Mackenzie's *Life of Scott*, p. 364.
[5] *Lockhart*, Vol. I, p. 29.

torical novels, "They may do their fooling with better grace; but I, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, do it more natural."[1] His knowledge of history and antiquities was that part of his intellectual equipment in which he seemed to take most pride. He had the highest opinion of the value of historical study for ripening men's judgment of current affairs,[2] and indeed there were few relations of life in which an acquaintance with history did not seem to him indispensable.

But he felt that historical writing had not been adapted "to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way."[3] Accordingly he resolved to use in the service of history that "knack . . . for selecting the striking and interesting points out of dull details," which he felt was his endowment.[4] The original introduction to the *Tales of the Crusaders* has the following burlesque announcement of his intention, in the words of the Eidolon Chairman: "I intend to write the most wonderful book which the world ever read—a book in which every incident shall be incredible, yet strictly true—a work recalling recollections with which the ears of this generation once tingled, and which shall be read by our children with an admiration approaching to incredulity. Such shall be the *Life of Napoleon,* by the *Author of Waverley.*" He wished to controvert "the vulgar opinion that the flattest and dullest mode of detailing events must uniformly be that which approaches nearest to the truth."[5] There is no doubt that his histories are readable, yet we feel that Southey was right in his comment on the *Life of Napoleon,*—"It was not possible that Sir Walter could keep up as a historian the character which he had obtained as a novelist; and in the first announcement of this 'Life' he had, not very wisely, promised something as stimulating as his novels. Alas! he forgot that there could be no stimulus of curiosity in it."[6] A recent critic has said, "Scott lost half his power of vitalizing the past when

[1] *Journal,* Vol. I, pp. 274–5; *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 44. See also his review of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer.*

[2] *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 103.

[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, p. 260.

[4] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 96.

[5] Review of Tytler's *History of Scotland, Quarterly,* November, 1829.

[6] *Southey's Letters,* Vol. IV, p. 62.

he sat down formally to record it—when he turned from his marvellous recreation of James I. to give a laboured but very ordinary portrait of Napoleon."[1] His partial failure in this instance may have been due to an unfortunate choice of subject. Only a few years before he wrote the book Scott had been thinking of Napoleon as a " tyrannical monster,"[2] a " singular emanation of the Evil Principle,"[3] " the arch-enemy of mankind,"[4]—phrases which, in spite of their vividness, hardly seem to promise a life-like portrayal of the man.[5]

In one notable respect, Scott's conception of how history should be written was very modern: he would depict the life of the people, not simply the actions of kings and statesmen. His historical novels, said Carlyle, " taught all men this truth, which looks like a truism, and yet was as good as unknown to writers of history and others, till so taught: that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state-papers, controversies, and abstractions of men."[6] One who has the academic notion that a novel, to be great, must be written with no ulterior purpose, is almost startled to observe how definitely Scott considered it the function of his novels to portray ancient manners. Speaking of old romances as a source which we may use for studying about our ancestors, he said: " From the romance, we learn what they were; from the history, what they did: and were we to be deprived of one of these two kinds of information, it might well be made a question, which is most useful or interesting."[7] He wished to make his own romances serve much the same purpose as those written in the midst of the customs which they unconsciously reflected. Of *Waverley* he said, " It may really boast to be a tolerably faithful portrait of Scottish manners."[8] He interrupts the story of *The Pirate* to describe the charm of the

[1] Herford's *Age of Wordsworth*, pp. 39–40.
[2] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 60.
[3] *Paul's Letters*, Letter XVI.
[4] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 320.
[5] On Goethe's favorable opinion of the *Napoleon*, see a letter given in the appendix to Scott's *Journal* (Vol. II, pp. 485–6 and note).
[6] Carlyle's *Essay on Scott*. See also Taine's *History of English Literature*, Introduction, I.
[7] Review of *Metrical Romances*, *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1806.
[8] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 333.

leaden heart, and offers this excuse: "As this simple and original remedy is peculiar to the isles of Thule, it were unpardonable not to preserve it at length, in a narrative connected with Scottish antiquities."[1] His comment on *Ivanhoe* was as follows: "I am convinced that however I myself may fail in the ensuing attempt, yet, with more labour in collecting, or more skill in using, the materials within his reach, illustrated as they have been by the labours of Dr. Henry, of the late Mr. Strutt, and above all, of Mr. Sharon Turner, an abler hand would have been successful."[2]

Scott's early reading was only the basis for the research that he undertook afterwards.[3] Much of this later study was accomplished when he was engaged upon such books as *Somers' Tracts, Dryden's* and *Swift's Works,* and the other historical publications that make the bibliography of Scott so surprising to the ordinary reader; but some of his investigations were undertaken specifically for the novels. The *Literary Correspondence* of his publisher, Archibald Constable, contains many evidences of Scott's efforts, assisted often by Constable, to get antiquarian and topographical details correct in the novels. In 1821 Constable suggested that Sir Walter write a story of the time of James I. of England, and was told, "If you can suggest anything about the period I will be happy to hear from you; you are always happy in your hints."[4] Some years earlier the author and the publisher had a correspondence concerning a series of letters on the history of Scotland which the former was planning to write, and which he wished to publish anonymously for the following reason: "I have not the least doubt that I will make a popular book, for I trust it will be both interesting and useful; but I never intended to engage in any proper historical labour, for which I have neither time, talent, nor

[1] *The Pirate,* Vol. II, p. 138.

[2] Introductory Epistle to *Ivanhoe.* Freeman, in his *Norman Conquest,* vigorously attacks *Ivanhoe* for its unwarranted picture of the relations between Saxons and Normans in the thirteenth century. (Vol. V, pp. 551–561.)

[3] Mr. Lang points out that he made many written notes of his reading, as we should hardly expect a man of his unrivalled memory to do. (*Life of Scott,* p. 27.)

[4] *Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, p. 161.

inclination. . . . In truth it would take ten years of any man's life to write such a History of Scotland as he should put his name to."[1] He called his *Napoleon* "the most severe and laborious undertaking which choice or accident ever placed on my shoulders."[2]

More than once Scott expresses the opinion that though novels may be useful to arouse curiosity about history, and to impart some knowledge to people who will not do any serious thinking, they may, on the other hand, work harm by satisfying with their superficial information those who would otherwise read history.[3] It seems as if he designed the *Life of Napoleon* and the *History of Scotland* for a new reading class that the novels had been creating, and as if he wished to make the step of transition not too long. We can almost fancy them as a series of graded books arranged to lead the people of Great Britain up to a sufficient height of historical information. The *Tales of a Grandfather* were intended for the beginners who had never been infected by the common heresy concerning the dulness of history, and who were blessed with sufficiently active imagination to make the sugar-coating of fiction superfluous.[4]

[1] *Constable's Correspondence,* Vol. III, pp. 93–4.

[2] *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart,* p. 247.

[3] Mr. Lang's theory that Scott was responsible for a decline in serious reading cannot be either proved or refuted completely, but more than one man has given personal testimony concerning the stimulating effect of the Waverley novels. Thierry's *Norman Conquest* was directly inspired by *Ivanhoe,* and with *Ivanhoe* is condemned by Freeman for its mistaken views. Mr. Andrew D. White says in his *Autobiography* that *Quentin Durward* and *Anne of Geierstein* led him to see the first that he had ever clearly discerned of the great principles that "lie hidden beneath the surface of events"—"the secret of the centralization of power in Europe, and of the triumph of monarchy over feudalism." (Vol. I, pp. 15–16.)

[4] Scott had theories as to what children's books ought to be. They should stir the imagination, he said, instead of simply imparting knowledge as certain scientific books attempted to do. (*Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 27.) But he seriously objected to any attempt to write down to the understanding of children. Of the *Tales of a Grandfather* he said: "I will make, if possible, a book that a child shall understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse, should he chance to take it up." (*Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 112. See also *ib.,* Vol. I, p. 19.) Anatole France has expressed ideas about children's books which are practically the same as those of Scott. (See *Le Livre de Mon Ami,* 3me partie: "A Madame D * * * .")

But great as was the interest that Scott took in the historical aspect of his work, his artistic sense guided his use of materials, and he was well aware of the danger of over-working the mine. The principles on which he chose periods and events to represent are illustrated in many of the introductions. Of *The Fortunes of Nigel* he said: "The reign of James I., in which George Heriot flourished, gave unbounded scope to invention in the fable, while at the same time it afforded greater variety and discrimination of character than could, with historical consistency, have been introduced if the scene had been laid a century earlier."[1]

His first published attempt at fiction-writing was a conclusion to the novel, *Queenhoo-Hall*,[2] of which his opinion was that it would never be popular because antiquarian knowledge was displayed in it too liberally. "The author," he says, "forgot . . . that extensive neutral ground, the large proportion, that is, of manners and sentiments which are common to us and to our ancestors, having been handed down unaltered from them to us, or which, arising out of the principles of our common nature, must have existed in either state of society."[3] Scott's practice in regard to the language of his historical novels was based on much the same theory. He intended to admit "no word or turn of phraseology betraying an origin directly modern,"[4] but to avoid obsolete words for the most part; and he never attempted to follow with fidelity the style of the exact age of which he was writing. The translation of Froissart by Lord Berners seemed to him a sufficiently good model to serve for the whole mediaeval period.[5] In his review of *Tales of My Landlord* he says of the proem to his book: "It is written in the quaint style of that prefixed by Gay to his *Pastorals*, being, as Johnson terms it, 'such imitation as he

[1] Introduction to *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

[2] See the Introduction to *Waverley*.

[3] Introductory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*.

[4] *Ibid.* In *Old Mortality*, Claverhouse was made to use the phrase "sentimental speeches," but when Lady Louisa Stuart pointed out to Scott that the word "sentimental" was modern, he struck it out of the second edition.

[5] Introductory Epistle to *Ivanhoe*. For other references to the use of a moderately antique diction see the essays on Walpole and Clara Reeve in *Lives of the Novelists*, and the review of Southey's *Amadis de Gaul*, *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1803.

could obtain of obsolete language, and by consequence, in a style that was never written or spoken in any age or place.'"

His *Journal* contains observations on several historical novels which were of little consequence, as, for example, on one by a Mr. Bell,—"He goes not the way to write it; he is too general, and not sufficiently minute";[1] and on *The Spae-Wife,* by Galt,—"He has made his story difficult to understand, by adopting a region of history little known."[2] On the other hand he remarked, when someone had suggested a number of historical subjects to him,—"People will not consider that a thing may already be so well told in history, that romance ought not in prudence to meddle with it";[3] and at another time he spoke of "the usual habit of antiquarians," to "neglect what is useful for things that are merely curious."[4]

Aside from the familiar knowledge of ancient manners which he thought enabled him to give his tales the necessary touch of novelty, and from the "hurried frankness," or spontaneity of style which endowed them with vitality, Scott believed that his talents included a special knack at description. He felt, however, that a sense of the picturesque in action was a different thing from a similar perception in regard to scenery, and that though the first was natural to him, he was obliged to use effort to develop the second.[5] Some study of drawing in his youth helped him to comprehend the demands of perspective, and he endeavored to carry out the principle of describing a scene in the way in which it would naturally strike the spectator, neither overloading with confused detail nor over-emphasizing what should be subordinate.[6] That his plan was consciously adopted may be seen from his discussion of Byron's skill in description and from his comments on the descriptive passages of the mediæval romances.[7]

[1] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 226.
[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 319.
[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. II, p. 216.
[4] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 223.
[5] *Lockhart,* Vol. I, p. 40.
[6] Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate.* See also *Letters to Heber,* pp. 128–32, and 154; and Ruskin's analysis of Scott's descriptions: *Modern Painters,* Part IV, ch. 16, § 23 ff.
[7] See particularly his reviews of *Childe Harold, Canto III, Quarterly,* October, 1816; and of Southey's translation of the *Amadis de Gaul, Edinburgh Review,* October, 1803.

At the same time he understood the advantages of the realistic method. On one occasion he stated as his creed, "that in nature herself no two scenes were exactly alike, and that whoever copied truly what was before his eyes would possess the same variety in his descriptions, and exhibit apparently an imagination as boundless as the range of nature in the scenes he recorded; whereas, whoever trusted to imagination would soon find his own mind circumscribed and contracted to a few favourite images, and the repetition of these would sooner or later produce that very monotony and barrenness which had always haunted descriptive poetry in the hands of any but the patient worshippers of truth."[1] Wordsworth disapproved of Scott's method in description. He is quoted as having said: "Nature does not permit an inventory to be made of her charms! He should have left his pencil and note-book at home [and] fixed his eye as he walked with a reverent attention on all that surrounded him."[2] Somewhat like a rejoinder sounds another remark of Scott's, in phrases that Wordsworth would have detested. Scott said cheerfully, "As to the actual study of nature, if you mean the landscape gardening of poetry. . . . I can get on quite as well from recollection, while sitting in the Parliament house, as if wandering through wood and wold."[3] At another time he said, "If a man will paint from nature, he will be likely to amuse those who are daily looking at it."[4]

Though Scott prided himself somewhat on his descriptive powers he realized that he could not do his best work on minute canvases. We have already seen how he contrasted himself with Jane Austen. "The exquisite touch," he said, "which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me."[5]

Of Scott's opinion in regard to the ethical effect of novels, I

[1] *Lockhart,* Vol. II, pp. 232–3.

[2] Quoted in *Wordsworth* (English Men of Letters) by F. W. H. Myers, p. 143.

[3] *Recollections of Scott,* by R. P. Gillies. *Fraser's,* xii: 254.

[4] *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 62.

[5] *Journal,* Vol. I, p. 155, and Vol. II, p. 37; *Lockhart,* Vol. IV, p. 476, and Vol. V, p. 380.

have already spoken.[1] The fact that he refused to use the conventional plea of a desire to improve public morals, and that he understood how little a reader is really influenced by the exalted sentiments of heroes of fiction, gave Carlyle a fit of righteous indignation;[2] but it is futile to say that Scott "had no message to deliver to the world." He might have retorted, in the words which he once used about Homer,—"Doubtless an admirable moral may be often extracted from his poem; because it contains an accurate picture of human nature, which can never be truly presented without conveying a lesson of instruction. But it may shrewdly be suspected that the moral was as little intended by the author as it would have been the object of an historian, whose work is equally pregnant with morality, though a detail of facts be only intended."[3] It was a comfort to Scott at the end of his life to reflect that the tendency of all he had written was morally good,[4] and we can well believe that he was pleased by the enthusiastic tribute of his young critic, J. L. Adolphus, who said of his books: "There is not an unhandsome action or degrading sentiment recorded of any person who is recommended to the full esteem of the reader."[5]

That Scott considered poetical power very important for a writer of novels, he made evident in his *Lives of the Novelists.* Mr. Herford has said, but surely without good reason, that Scott wholly lacked the sense of mystery, and that in this respect Mrs. Radcliffe was more modern than he.[6] Yet it was Scott who censured Mrs. Radcliffe for explaining her mysteries. He had a vein of superstition in his nature, too, about which he might have said, using the words given to a character in one of his stories,—"It soothes my imagination, without influencing my reason or conduct."[7] A liking for the wonderful and terrible, which he felt from his earliest childhood, was one manifestation of a poetical temperament which is so apparent that there is no need of reciting the evidence. The poetical quali-

[1] In the discussion of *Lives of the Novelists.*
[2] See his *Essay on Scott.*
[3] *Dryden,* Vol. XIV, p. 136.
[4] *Lockhart,* Vol. V, p. 415, and Introductory Epistle to *Nigel.*
[5] *Letters to Heber,* p. 44.
[6] *Op. cit.,* p. 120.
[7] *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror.*

ties in the Waverley novels gave Adolphus one of his favorite arguments in the attempt to prove that Scott was the author.

Yet Scott seemed to feel that his position as a writer of popular fiction, however much the novel is capable of being the vehicle of imagination and poetical power, was not a really high one. James Ballantyne persuaded him to omit from one of his introductions a passage that seemed to belittle the occupation of his life,[1] but in the introduction to *The Abbot* he wrote: "Though it were worse than affectation to deny that my vanity was satisfied at my success in the department in which chance had in some measure enlisted me, I was nevertheless far from thinking that the novelist or romance-writer stands high in the ranks of literature." The ideal which he set for himself is indicated in the following passage of his article on *Tales of My Landlord:* "If . . . the features of an age gone by can be recalled in a spirit of delineation at once faithful and striking . . . the composition is in every point of view dignified and improved; and the author, leaving the light and frivolous associates with whom a careless observer would be disposed to ally him, takes his seat on the bench of the historians of his time and country." He once expressed the opinion that the historical romance approaches, in some measure, when it is nobly executed, to the epic in poetry.[2] When a medal of Scott, engraved from the bust by Chantrey, was struck off, he suggested the motto which was used:

"Bardorum citharas patrio qui reddidit Istro,"

and said, "because I am far more vain of having been able to fix some share of public attention upon the ancient poetry and manners of my country, than of any original efforts which I have been able to make in literature."[3] The following commendation, which he wrote for a book of portraits accompanied by essays, might be made to apply to his novels: "It is impossible for me to conceive a work which ought to be more interesting to the present age than that which exhibits before our eyes our 'fathers as they lived'"[4] He felt strongly the value

[1] *Journal,* Vol. II, p. 8.
[2] Review of Hoffmann's Novels, *Foreign Quarterly Review,* July, 1827.
[3] *Letters to R. Polwhele,* etc., p. 102.
[4] Lodge's *Illustrious Personages,* Preface.

and importance of past manners, faiths and ideals for the present, and from this point of view took satisfaction in the social and ethical teaching of his novels.

On the whole, Scott's opinions about his own work fitted well with his general literary principles, except that his modesty inclined him to discount his own performance while he overestimated that of others. With this qualification we may remember that he always spoke sensibly about his work, without affectation, and with abundant geniality. We are reminded of the comment on Molière quoted by Scott from a French writer,—"He had the good fortune to escape the most dangerous fault of an author writing upon his own compositions, and to exhibit wit, where some people would only have shown vanity and self-conceit."[1]

[1] Article on Molière, *Foreign Quarterly Review,* February, 1828.

CHAPTER VI

Scott's Position as Critic

Comparison of Scott with Jeffrey and with the Romantic critics—His criticism largely appreciative—Romantic in special cases and Augustan in attitude—Comparison with Coleridge—Scott's respect for the verdict of the public—His opinion that elucidation is the function of criticism—Use of historical illustration—Hesitation about analysing poetry—Political criticism—Verdict of his contemporaries on his criticism—Influence as a critic—Literary prophecies—Character of his critical work as a whole—His attitude towards it—Lack of system—Broad fields he covered—His greatness a reason for the importance of his criticism.

Important as Scott's poetry was in the English Romantic revival, as a critic he can hardly be counted among the Romanticists. His attitude, nevertheless, differed radically from that of the school represented by Jeffrey and Gifford. We have already seen that he disliked their manner of reviewing, and that he was conscious of complete disagreement with Jeffrey in regard to poetic ideals. Of Jeffrey Mr. Gates has said: "[He] rarely *appreciates* a piece of literature. . . . He is always for or against his author; he is always making points."[1] That Scott was influenced in his early critical work by the tone of the *Edinburgh Review* is undeniable, but temperamentally he was inclined to give any writer a fair chance to stir his emotions; and he did not adopt the magisterial mood that dictated the famous remark, "This will never do." Scott's style lacked the adroitness and pungency which helped Jeffrey successfully to take the attitude of the censor, and which made his satire triumphant among his contemporaries. Scott declined, moreover, to cultivate skill in a method which he considered unfair. Compared with Jeffrey's his criticism wanted incisiveness, but it wears better.

The period was transitional, and Jeffrey did not go so far as Scott in breaking away from the dictation of his predecessors. But his attitude was on the whole more modern than

[1] *Three Studies in Literature*, p. 12.

the reader would infer from the following sentence in one of his earliest reviews: "Poetry has this much at least in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question."[1] He considered himself rather an interpreter of public opinion than a judge defining ancient legislation, but he used the opinion of himself and like-minded men as an unimpeachable test of what the greater public ought to believe in regard to literature. We may remember that the enthusiasm over the Elizabethan dramatists which seems a special property of Lamb and Hazlitt, and which Scott shared, was characteristic also of Jeffrey himself. It was Jeffrey's dogmatism and his repugnance to certain fundamental ideas which were to become dominant in the poetry of the nineteenth century that lead us to consider him one of the last representatives of the eighteenth century critical tradition. Scott praised the Augustan writers as warmly as Jeffrey did, but he was more hospitable to the newer literary impulse. "Perhaps the most damaging accusation that can be made against Jeffrey as a critic," says Mr. Gates, "is inability to read and interpret the age in which he lived."[2]

Scott's criticism was largely appreciative, but appreciative on a somewhat different plane from that of the contemporary critics whom we are accustomed to place in a more modern school: Hazlitt, Hunt, Lamb, and Coleridge. His judgments were less delicate and subtle than the judgments of these men were apt to be, and more "reasonable" in the eighteenth-century sense; they were marked, however, by a regard for the imagination that would have seemed most unreasonable to many men of the eighteenth century.

Scott had not a fixed theory of literature which could dominate his mind when he approached any work. He was open-minded, and in spite of his extreme fondness for the poetry of Dr. Johnson he was apt to be on the Romantic side in any specific critical utterance. We have seen also that he resembled the Romanticists in his power to disengage his verdicts

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, No. 1, October, 1802: review of *Thalaba*.
[2] *Three Studies in Literature*, p. 38.

on literature from ethical considerations. On the other hand he seems always to have deferred to the standard authorities of the classical criticism of his time when his own knowledge was not sufficient to guide him. In discussing Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse he wrote: "It must be remembered that the rules of criticism, now so well known as to be even trite and hackneyed, were then almost new to the literary world."[1]

Perhaps the main reason why one would not class Scott's critical work with that of the Romanticists is that he had no desire to proclaim a new era in creative literature or in criticism. Like the Romanticists he was ready to substitute "for the absolute method of judging by reference to an external standard of 'taste,' a method at once imaginative and historical";[2] yet he talked less about imagination than about good sense. The comparison with Boileau suggests itself, for Scott admired that critic in the conventional fashion, calling him "a supereminent authority,"[3] and Boileau also had said much about "reason and good sense." But Scott had an appreciation of the *furor poeticus* that made "good sense" quite a different thing to him from what it was to Boileau. He did not say, moreover, that the poet should be supremely characterized by good sense, but that the critic,. recognizing the facts about human emotion, should make use of that quality.

The subjective process by which experience is transmuted into literature engaged Scott's attention very little: in this respect also he stands apart from the newer school of critics. The metaphysical description of imagination or fancy interested him less than the piece of literature in which these qualities were exhibited. His own mental activities were more easily set in motion than analysed, and the introspective or philosophical attitude of mind was unnatural to him. Because of his adoption of the historical method of studying literature, and the similarity of many of his judgments to those which were in general characteristic of the Romantic school, we may say that Scott's criticism looks forward; but it shows the influ-

[1] *Dryden*, Vol. XI, p. 26.
[2] Herford, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–2.
[3] *Essay on the Drama.*

ence of the earlier period in its acceptance of traditional judgments based on external standards which disregarded the nature of the creative process.

From Coleridge Scott is separated in the most definite way. Coleridge began at the foundation, building up a set of principles such as the new impulse in literature seemed to demand. Scott preferred the concrete, and was stimulated by the particular book to express opinions that would never have come to his mind as the result of pursuing a train of unembodied ideas. Coleridge's judgments, moreover, would be unaffected by public estimation, for he sought to found them on the spiritual and philosophic consciousness that exists apart from the crowd.[1] Scott, on the other hand, was ready to use popular judgment as an important test of his opinions. Coleridge himself pointed out another interesting contrast. He wrote: "Dear Sir Walter Scott and myself were exact, but harmonious opposites in this;—that every old ruin, hill, river, or tree, called up in his mind a host of historical or biographical associations, . . . whereas, for myself, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson, I believe I should walk over the plain of Marathon without taking more interest in it than in any other plain of similar features."[2] We might perhaps say that Coleridge's affection was given to ideas, Scott's, to objects; hence Coleridge was a critic of literary principles and theories, Scott a critic of individual books and writers. It follows that Scott was on the whole an impressionistic critic. A study of his personality is essential to a consideration of his critical work, for he was not so much a systematic student of literature, guided by fixed principles, as a man of a certain temperament who read particular things and made particular remarks about them as he felt inclined. The inconsistencies and contradictions which would naturally result from such a procedure are occasionally noticeable, but they are fewer than would occur in the work of a less well-balanced man than himself.

His ideas about criticism were influenced by his feeling that the judgment of the public would after all take its own course,

[1] Wylie, *Studies in Criticism*, pp. 107–8.
[2] *Table Talk*, August 4, 1833. *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 472.

and that it was in the long run the best criterion. He used his opinion that an author, even in his own life-time, commonly receives fair treatment from the public, as an argument against establishing in England any literary body having the power of pensioning literary men.[1] On this subject he said, "There is . . . really no occasion for encouraging by a society the competition of authors. The land is before them, and if they really have merit they seldom fail to conquer their share of public applause and private profit. . . . I cannot, in my knowledge of letters, recollect more than two men whose merit is undeniable while, I am afraid, their circumstances are narrow. I mean Coleridge and Maturin."

Scott's whole attitude toward criticism shows that he felt its supreme function to be elucidation. It should also, he believed, warn the world against books that were foolish, or pernicious, intellectually or morally; but unless there were good reason for issuing such warnings the bad books should be ignored and the good treated sympathetically, not without such discrimination as should distinguish between the better and the worse in them, but with emphasis on the better. His literary creed, though not formulated into a system, was conscious and fairly definite; but it consisted of general principles which never resolved themselves into intricate subtleties requiring great space for their development. Scott could not think in that way, and he felt convinced that such thinking was useless and worse than useless. A magazine-writer of his own period who said of him,—"The author of *Waverley*, we apprehend, has neither the patience nor the disposition requisite for writing philosophically upon any subject,"[2] was mistaken, for much of Scott's criticism, without making any pretensions, is really philosophical. But any fine-drawn analysis seemed to him to serve the vanity of the critic rather than the need of the public; and he despised that arrogance in the critic which leads him to assume to direct literary taste.

Historical illustration was that kind of editorial work which he found most congenial, and which harmonized best with his

[1] *Familiar Letters*, Vol. II, p. 402.

[2] Article on Scott's *Demonology and Witchcraft*, *Fraser's*, December, 1830.

critical principles; for when he could bring definite facts to the service of elucidation he felt that he was doing something worth while. Among all the introductions and annotations that we have from his hand, including those of the *Dryden* and the *Swift,* this kind of explanation greatly predominates over the more strictly literary comment; in his reviews, also, it is evident that he seized every opportunity for turning from literary to historical discussion. He was in the habit of "embroidering the subject, whatever it might be, with lively anecdotic illustration,"[1] as one of his biographers says. We are not to conclude that in writing on specifically literary subjects he felt ill at ease. He felt, on the contrary, that the objection lay in the too great ease with which the critic might become dictatorial. He was fond enough of details when they were concrete and vital. The facts of literary history were in this category to him, as distinguished from the notions of literary theory; and we find that his critical principles are apt to appear incidentally among remarks on what seemed to him the more tangible and important facts of literary and social history. The books he chose to review were chiefly those which gave him a chance to use his historical information and imagination. His ideas were concrete, as those of a great novelist must inevitably be. Indeed the dividing line between creative work and criticism seems often to be obliterated in Scott's literary discussions, since he was inclined to amplify and illustrate instead of dissecting the book under consideration. As a critic he was distinguished by the qualities which appear in his novels, and which may be described in Hazlitt's words, as "the most amazing retentiveness of memory, and vividness of conception of what would happen, be seen, and felt by everybody in given circumstances."[2]

Scott felt that there was especial danger of futile theorizing in the criticism of poetry. In writing about *Alexander's Feast* he discussed for a moment the possibility of detecting points at which the author had paused in his work, but almost immediately he stopped himself with the characteristic remark—

[1] Mackenzie's *Life of Scott,* p. 118.
[2] *The Plain Speaker,* Hazlitt's *Works,* Vol. VII, p. 345.

"There may be something fanciful . . . in this reasoning, which I therefore abandon to the reader's mercy; only begging him to observe, that we have no mode of estimating the exertions of a quality so capricious as a poetic imagination."[1] Early in his career he gave this rather over-amiable explanation of the fact that he had never undertaken to review poetry: "I am sensible there is a greater difference of tastes in that department than in any other, and that there is much excellent poetry which I am not nowadays able to read without falling asleep, and which would nevertheless have given me great pleasure at an earlier period of my life. Now I think there is something hard in blaming the poor cook for the fault of our own palate or deficiency of appetite."[2] We have seen that he did review poetry afterwards, but that he was inclined to do it with the least possible emphasis on the specifically æsthetic elements. On the subject of novel-writing he developed a somewhat fuller critical theory, but here also his discussions concerned themselves rather with the kind of ideas set forth than with the manner of presentation.

It does indeed seem as if Scott's feelings were more easily aroused to the point of formulating "laws" in the field of political criticism than in that which appears to us his more legitimate sphere. He has his fling, to be sure, at Madame de Staël, because she "lived and died in the belief that revolutions were to be effected, and countries governed, by a proper succession of clever pamphlets."[3] But in proposing the establishment of the *Quarterly Review* he made no secret of the fact that his motives were political. The literary aspect of the periodical was thought of as a subordinate, though a necessary and not unimportant phase of the undertaking. The *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther* contain some very definite maxims on the subject of political economy, and just as decided are the remarks made in the last of *Paul's Letters,* as well as in the *Life of Napoleon* and elsewhere, as to how Louis XVIII. ought to set about the task of calming his distracted kingdom of

[1] *Dryden,* Vol. I, p. 342. See above, pp. 136–7.
[2] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, p. 84.
[3] *Life of Bage,* in *Novelists' Library.*

France. But however emphatic Scott may be in the comments on government which appear throughout his writings, he was as strongly averse in this matter as in literary affairs to any separation of philosophy from fact: his maxims are always derived from experience. The following statement of opinion is typical: "In legislating for an ancient people, the question is not, what is the best possible system of law, but what is the best they can bear. Their habitudes and prejudices must always be respected; and, whenever it is practicable, those prejudices, instead of being destroyed, ought to be taken as the basis of the new regulations."[1]

It was Scott's political creed that roused the ire of such men as Hazlitt and Hunt, though they may also have been exasperated at the unprecedented success of poetry which seemed so facile and so superficial to them as Scott's. Leigh Hunt calls him "a poet of a purely conventional order," "a bitter and not very large-minded politician," "a critic more agreeable than subtle."[2] But Scott's politics may be looked at in another way. "In his patriotism," says Mr. Courthope, "his passionate love of the past, and his reverence for established authority, literary or political, Scott is the best representative among English men of letters of Conservatism in its most generous form."[3]

Though it seems to have been a common opinion among the literary men of his own time that Scott's criticism was superficial, his knowledge of mediæval literature was, as we have seen, recognized and respected. Favorable comments by his contemporaries on other parts of his critical work are not difficult to find. For example, Gifford wrote to Murray in re-

[1] *Essay on Judicial Reform, Edinburgh Annual Register,* Vol. I, pt. 2, p. 352. Everyone knows that Scott was a decided Tory, and it is commonly supposed that he was an extremely prejudiced partisan. But he closes a political passage in *Woodstock* with these words: "We hasten to quit political reflections, the rather that ours, we believe, will please neither Whig nor Tory." (End of Chapter 11.) From the definitions of Whig and Tory given in the *Tales of a Grandfather,* no one could guess his politics. (Chapter 53.)

[2] Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography,* Vol. I, p. 263. See also pp. 258–260, and the notes on his *Feast of the Poets.*

[3] Courthope's *Liberal Movement,* p. 122.

gard to the article on *Lady Suffolk's Correspondence:* "Scott's paper is a clever, sensible thing—the work of a man who knows what he is about."[1] Isaac D'Israeli made the following observation on another of Scott's papers: "The article on Pepys, after so many have been written, is the only one which, in the most charming manner possible, shows the real value of these works, which I can assure you many good scholars have no idea of." A more recent verdict may be set beside those just quoted, and it is in perfect agreement with them. "His critical faculty," says Professor Saintsbury, "if not extraordinarily subtle, was always as sound and shrewd as it was good-natured."

Scott's influence as a critic was not very great, but his creative work exerted a strong influence on criticism as well as on the whole intellectual life of his age. His own novels demanded of the critic that kind of appreciation of the large qualities and negligence of the small which he had insisted on considering the function of criticism; and they became a fact in literature which determined to some degree the attitude taken toward ephemeral ideas. Newman notes the popularity of Scott's novels as one of the influences which prepared the ground for the Tractarian movement, for Scott enriched the visions of men by his pictures of the past, gave them noble ideas, and created a desire for a greater richness of spiritual life.[4] Much of his criticism also was inspired by the wish to construct an adequate picture of the past; so far it worked in the same direction with the novels. Its most important offices aside from this were perhaps to present large and kindly views of literature and literary characters, especially through biographical essays; and to ameliorate somewhat the prevailing asperity of periodical criticism.

[1] *Life of Murray*, Vol. II, p. 159. [2] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 232.
[3] *Macmillan's Magazine*, lxx: 326.

[4] Newman's *Apologia*, pp. 96–97. Mark Twain thinks the influence of the novels was pernicious. He says: "A curious exemplification of the power of a single book for good or harm is shown in the effects wrought by Don Quixote and those wrought by Ivanhoe. The first swept the world's admiration for the mediaeval chivalry-silliness out of existence; and the other restored it. . . . Sir Walter had so large a hand in making Southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the war." (*Life on the Mississippi*, ch. xlvi.)

A man of Scott's temperament was little likely to set himself up for a prophet, and probably no literary prophecies of his were in the least influential. Though he sometimes boasted that he understood the varying currents of popular taste, his experience in the publishing business taught him the fallibility of his impressions when the work of writers other than himself was concerned. He once wrote,—"The friends who know me best, and to whose judgment I am myself in the constant habit of trusting, reckon me a very capricious and uncertain judge of poetry; and I have had repeated occasion to observe that I have often failed in anticipating the reception of poetry from the public."[1] But it is beyond the strength of flesh and blood to resist saying things about the future sometimes, and Scott occasionally yielded to the temptation, helped, no doubt, by his amiability. Southey's *Madoc,* however, has not yet assumed that place at the feet of Milton which, as we have seen, he ventured to predict for it. Yet, if we may trust the memory of one of his friends, Scott foresaw the literary success of two of his greatest contemporaries. R. P. Gillies said in his *Recollections:* "I remember well how correct Scott's impressions were of such beginners in the literary world as had not then acquired any fixed character. Of Lord Byron he had from the first a favourable impression. . . . Of Wordsworth he always spoke favourably, insisting that he was a true poet, but predicting that it would be long ere his works obtained the praise which they merited from the public."[2] Scott explicitly prided himself on two of his prophecies: that Washington Irving would make a name for himself, and that Sir Arthur Wellesley would become known as an extraordinary man.

Though Scott's critical work is comparatively little known, and though it presents no solidly organized front by which the public may be impressed, the opinions of so notable a writer have always had a certain weight. Mr. Churton Collins thinks Scott's judgment on Dunbar has led modern editors to indulge

[1] *Familiar Letters,* Vol. I, pp. 216–17. See also his remarks upon booksellers in his review of Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials, Quarterly,* February, 1831.

[2] *Fraser's,* xiii: 693.

in very exaggerated statements concerning the merit of that poet.[1] A heavier charge has been laid at Scott's door on the score of his edition of the *Memoirs of Captain Carleton*. He concluded on very insufficient evidence, says Colonel Parnell, that these memoirs were genuinely historical, published them as such, and by the weight of his opinion falsified "the whole stream of nineteenth-century history bearing on the reign of Queen Anne."[2] Stanhope, Macaulay, and other historians were ready to accept Scott's judgment without further investigation, it seems; and if the accusation be true we may conclude that his influence as a critic has reached farther than might at first sight appear. Yet we may be content to follow his lead in general, except in those bits of enthusiasm over his friends which bear witness to a generously optimistic nature rather than to a rigid critical attitude such as we should hardly demand in any case from a man of letters commenting on his contemporaries and friends. George Ticknor was greatly impressed by the "right-mindedness" of the young Sophia Scott,[3] and we may fairly adopt the word to describe the father whom she so much resembled. There was in him, as Carlyle said, "such a sunny current of true humour and humanity, a free joyful sympathy with so many things; what of fire he had all lying so beautifully latent, as radical latent heat, as fruitful internal warmth of life;—a most robust, healthy man!"[4]

Writers upon Scott have made much, perhaps too much, of his feeling that his position as a landed gentleman was more enviable than his prominence as a writer. The point would be of greater consequence if it performed so important a function in explaining his work as has commonly been assigned to it. We are told that he wrote much and hastily because he wanted money to establish and support an estate; but the truth is that if he wrote at all he had to write in this way. He justly believed that he could do his best work so. Yet it was a natural result of his facility that he should look upon the literature he

[1] Essay on Dunbar in *Ephemera Critica*.
[2] *English Historical Review*, vi: 97.
[3] *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, Vol. I, p. 283.
[4] Carlyle's *Essay on Scott*.

produced as of comparatively little moment. Some of his remarks about his critical work, however, show that he really regarded creative writing as the business of his life, and that in contrast with it he considered his criticism a relief from more arduous labor. After the publication of *Marmion* he wrote: "I have done with poetry for some time—it is a scourging crop, and ought not to be hastily repeated. Editing, therefore, may be considered as a green crop of turnips or peas, extremely useful for those whose circumstances do not admit of giving their farm a summer fallow."[1] After years of novel-writing he said of writing a review, "No one that has not laboured as I have done on imaginary topics can judge of the comfort afforded by walking on all-fours, and being grave and dull."[2]

From what Scott said about Dryden as a critic we may conclude that the unsystematic character of his own scholarly work may have been a matter of principle as well as inclination. "Dryden," he wrote, "forebore, from prudence, indolence, or a regard for the freedom of Parnassus, to erect himself into a legislator."[3] The words remind us of comments made upon Scott's own work, as for example by Professor Masson, who spoke of "the shrewdness and sagacity of some of his critical prefaces to his novels, where he discusses principles of literature without seeming to call them such."[4] Scott was quick to notice "cant and slang"[5] in the professional language of men in all arts; and he valued most highly the remarks of those whose intelligence had not been overlaid by a conventional pedantry.

Knowing that criticism was not the main business of his life, we are inclined to be surprised at the broad fields which he seemed to have no hesitation in entering upon. His remarkable memory doubtless had something to do with this, but he lived in a period when generalization was more possible and more permissible than it is in this era of special monographs.

[1] *Lockhart*, Vol. II, p. 9.
[2] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 259; *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 248.
[3] *Dryden*, Vol. I, conclusion.
[4] *British Novelists and their Styles*, p. 204.
[5] *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 173; *Lockhart*, Vol. V, p. 99.

The large tendencies and characteristics that he traced in his essay on Romance, for instance, are undoubtedly to be qualified at numberless points, but writing when he did, Scott was comparatively untroubled by these limitations. Moreover, he had the gift of seeing things broadly, so that in essentials his survey remains true. But the amount of his work is almost as astonishing as its scope and variety. He could accomplish so much only by disregarding details of form; and that he did so we know from our study of his principles of composition, confirmed by the evidence of the passages from him that have here been quoted. It is clear, also, that he was not limited by that "horror of the obvious," which, as Mr. Saintsbury says, "bad taste at all times has taken for a virtue."[1] Beyond this we have to fall back for explanation on the unusual qualities of his mind. An observing friend said of him that, "With a degree of patience and quietude which are seldom combined with much energy, he could get through an incredible extent of literary labour."[2]

Every quality which made Scott a great man contributes to the interest and importance of his criticism. Such a body of criticism, formulated by a large creative genius, would be of special consequence if it served merely as the basis for a study of his other work, a commentary on the principles which underlay his whole literary achievement. But it would be strange if a man of Scott's intellectual personality could write criticism which was not important in itself, and we can only account for the general neglect of this part of his work by considering how large a place his poems and novels give him in the history of our literature. If he deserves a still larger place, we may remember with satisfaction that as a man he was great enough to support honorably any distinction won by his mind.

[1] *History of Criticism*, Vol. I, p. 156.
[2] *Recollections of Scott* by R. P. Gillies, *Fraser's*, xii: 688.

APPENDIX I.

Bibliography

The bibliography of Scott's writings is given in three parts, as follows:

1. Books which Scott wrote or edited, or to which he was an important contributor. The list is chronological.
2. Contributions to periodicals.
3. Books which contain letters written by Scott. These titles are arranged approximately in the order of their importance from the point of view of a study of Scott.

1. *Books which Scott wrote or edited, or to which he was an important contributor.*

(In the following list the first editions of the poems and novels are noted without bibliographical details. In the case of other works the main facts in regard to publication are given; and an attempt is made to indicate the nature of the books named, unless they have been discussed in the text.)

1796 The Chase and William and Helen. (Translated from Bürger.)

1799 Goetz of Berlichingen. (Translated from Goethe.)

Apology for Tales of Terror.

Twelve copies were privately printed, to exhibit the work of the Ballantyne press at Kelso. The title was occasioned by the delay in the publication of Matthew Lewis's Tales of Terror, and the little book contains poems which Scott had contributed to that work. (The contents are named in the Catalogue of the Centenary Exhibtion.)

1800 The Eve of St. John, a Border ballad.

1802–3 Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; consisting of historical and romantic ballads, collected in the southern counties of Scotland; with a few of modern date founded upon local tradition.

3 vols. Vols. 1 and 2, Kelso, 1802; vol. 3, Edinburgh, 1803. Second edition, 1803. The book was republished frequently

before 1830, when it was included in the collected edition of Scott's poems. It has also been reprinted independently since then several times. The latest and most complete edition is that published in 1902, edited by T. F. Henderson. Other books in which part of Scott's ballad material was used in such a way as to give his name a place on the title-page are named below:

Kinmont Willie: a Border ballad, with an historical introduction, by Sir Walter Scott. (Carlisle Tracts No. 6) Carlisle, 1841.

A Ballad Book by C. K. Sharpe. MDCCCXXIII. Reprinted with notes and ballads from the unpublished manuscripts of C. K. Sharpe and Sir Walter Scott . . . edited by . . . D. Laing. Edinburgh, 1880.

1804 Sir Tristrem: a metrical romance of the thirteenth century, by Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer. Edited from the Auchinleck manuscript by Walter Scott. Edinburgh.

Only 12 copies of Sir Tristrem were printed in the form in which Scott had intended to publish it, without the expurgation which his friends insisted upon. (*Letters to R. Polwhele,* etc., p. 18; *Lockhart,* I. 361). The following book contains a part of the same material:

A Penni worth of Witte, Florice and Blancheflour, and other pieces of ancient English poetry, selected from the Auchinleck manuscript. (With an account of the Auchinleck manuscript by Sir Walter Scott) Edinburgh, 1857. Printed for the Abbotsford Club.

1805 The Lay of the Last Minstrel.

1806 Original Memoirs written during the great civil war; being the life of Sir H. Slingsby, and memoirs of Capt. Hodgson. With notes, etc. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

Ballads and Lyrical Pieces. [Poems which had already appeared in various collections.]

1808 Marmion.

Memoirs of Captain Carleton, . . . including anecdotes of the war in Spain under the Earl of Peterborough, . . . written by himself. Edinburgh. (8vo, but 25 copies were printed on large paper.) [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

Scott was probably mistaken in considering this to be a genuine autobiography. (See Col. Parnell's argument in *The English Historical Review,* vi: 97.) It has been attributed to Defoe, and Col. Parnell attributes it to Swift, but the question of its authorship is

still unsolved. The book was first published in 1728, but Scott used the edition of 1743, which he was so inaccurate as to take for the original edition; and as at that date Defoe had long been dead and Swift had lost his mind, the possibility of attributing it to either of them naturally would not occur to him. Scott wrote scarcely any notes, but his short introduction contains some interesting general reflections which are quoted by Lockhart.

The Works of John Dryden, now first collected; illustrated with notes, historical, critical and explanatory, and a life of the author, by Walter Scott, Esq. 18 vols. London.

Second edition, 18 vols., Edinburgh, 1821.
Another edition, revised and corrected by George Saintsbury, Edinburgh, 1882–1893.

The Life of John Dryden (4to, only 50 copies printed).

Memoirs of John Dryden, Paris, 1826.

Memoirs of Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth, written by himself, and Fragmenta Regalia, being a history of Queen Elizabeth's favourites, by Sir Robert Naunton. With explanatory annotations. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

Scott contributed no introductions, but his notes are copious, especially with regard to the history of the Border. This is one of the books of which Scott is reported to have said to his publisher, Mr. Constable, "Did I not do Hodgson, Carey, Carleton, etc., to serve you; and did I ever ask or receive any remuneration?" (*Ballantyne's Refutation,* etc., p. 76.)

Queenhoo-Hall, a romance; and Ancient Times, a drama. By the late Joseph Strutt, author of Rural Sports and Pastimes of the People of England. [Edited by Scott, who wrote a conclusion for Queenhoo-Hall. This conclusion is given in an appendix to the introduction of Waverley.] Edinburgh.

1809 The State Papers and Letters of Sir Ralph Sadler . . . edited by Arthur Clifford . . . to which is added a memoir of the life of Sir Ralph Sadler, with historical notes, by Walter Scott, Esq. 2 vols. Edinburgh. (Also the same work in 3 vols., with same date.)

The biography is included in all the editions of Scott's Prose Works.

The Life of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, written by himself. With a prefatory memoir. Edinburgh; printed by James Ballantyne & Co. for John Ballantyne & Co. and John Murray. (A reprint of Walpole's edition, with the prefatory memoir added.)

It is a question whether Scott edited this book, but it has been ascribed to him, and is given under his name without hesitation in the British Museum catalogue. The prefatory memoir is short and largely made up of quotations, but it sounds as if Scott might have written it. The book is one to which he often refers. Mr. Sidney Lee, in his edition of the Autobiography, says merely, "Walpole's edition was reprinted in 1770, 1809, and in 1826." Reprinted in the Universal Library: Biography, vol. I, London, 1853.

1809–15 A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts on the most interesting and entertaining subjects: but chiefly such as relate to the history and constitution of these kingdoms. Selected from an infinite number in print and manuscript, in the Royal, Cotton, Sion, and other public, as well as private, libraries; particularly that of the late Lord Somers. The second edition, revised, augmented, and arranged by Walter Scott, Esq. 13 vols. London.

There are some additions. Scott says in the Advertisement: "The Memoirs of the Wars in the Low Countries by the gallant Williams, and the very singular account of Ireland by Derrick, are the most curious of those now published for the first time. . . . The introductory remarks and notes have been added by the present Editor, at the expense of some time and labour. It is needless to observe, that both have been expended upon a humble and unambitious, though not, it is hoped, an useless task. The object of the introductions was to present such a short and summary view of the circumstances under which the Historical and Controversial Tracts were respectively written, as to prevent the necessity of referring to other works. Such therefore, as refer to events of universal notoriety are but slightly and generally mentioned; such as concern less remarkable points of history are more fully explained. The Notes are in general illustrative of obscure passages, or brief notices of authorities, whether corroborative or contradictory of the text." The following book contains a part of the same material:

The Image of Irelande with a Discoverie of Woodkarne. By John Derricke, 1581. With Notes by Sir Walter Scott. Edited by John Small. Edinburgh, 1883. (See *Somers' Tracts,* Vol. I.)

1810 English Minstrelsy. Being a selection of fugitive poetry from the best English authors, with some original pieces hitherto unpublished. 2 vols. Edinburgh.

The Centenary Catalogue says that Scott and his friend William Erskine edited this book together. In the Advertisement the publishers (John Ballantyne & Co.) say: "To one eminent individual, whose name they do not venture to particularize, they are indebted for most valuable assistance in selection, arrangement, and contribution; and to that individual they take this opportunity to present the humble tribute of their thanks, for a series of kindnesses, of which that now acknowledged is among the least." There is no critical apparatus. The book contains original poems by Scott, Southey, Rogers, Joanna Baillie, and others not so well known.

The Lady of the Lake.

Memoirs of the Duke of Sully. Translated from the French [by Charlotte Lennox] , . . a new edition . . . corrected, with additional notes, some letters of Henry the Great, and a brief historical introduction embellished with portraits. 5 vols. London.

Another edition, 4 vols. London 1858, has these words on the title-page: "A new edition, revised and corrected; with additional notes, and an historical introduction, attributed to Sir Walter Scott." I have found no external evidence that Scott was the editor. The introduction sounds as if Scott wrote it, but that so much work could have been done by him without occasioning any record seems unlikely. There is a historical introduction of 35 pp., and copious notes. The book is one with which Scott was familiar. See Memoirs of Robert Carey, pp. 34 and 41.

The Poetical Works of Anna Seward, with extracts from her literary correspondence. Edited by Walter Scott, Esq. 3 vols. Edinburgh.

The biographical preface is given in the Miscellaneous Prose Works. The notes are by Miss Seward.

Ancient British Drama, in three volumes. London. (Printed for William Miller, by James Ballantyne & Co., Edinburgh.)

I find no evidence that Scott was the editor of this book, but it is sometimes ascribed to him in library catalogues. It contains merely a two-page introduction and brief notes, and a collection of plays. (See above, p. 52, note.)

1811 The Modern British Drama, in five volumes. London. (Printed for William Miller, by James Ballantyne & Co., Edinburgh.)

Vols. I and II, Tragedies, with introduction in vol. I.
Vols. III and IV, Comedies, with introduction in vol. III.
Vol. V, Operas and Farces, with introduction.
These volumes apparently belong to the same collection as the Ancient British Drama, noted above, and the external evidence for Scott's authorship is the same. But the introductions are fuller, and they sound very much like Scott. (See above, p. 52, note.)

The Vision of Don Roderick.

Memoirs of the Court of Charles II, by Count Grammont. With numerous additions and illustrations. London. [Edited by Scott.]

Reprinted in 1846, 1853, 1864. This last edition, in the Bohn Library, has about 100 pp. of historical notes.

Secret History of the Court of James the First. With notes and introductory remarks. 2 vols. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

The book contains 1. Osborne's Traditional Memoirs; 2. Sir Anthony Welldon's Court and Character of King James; 3. Aulicus Coquinariae; 4. Sir Edward Peyton's Divine Catastrophe of the House of Stuarts.

1813 Rokeby.

Memoirs of the Reign of King Charles I., by Sir Philip Warwick. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

The Bridal of Triermain.

1814 Illustrations of Northern Antiquities from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian romances, by Robert Jamieson . . . with an abstract of the Eyrbyggja-Saga; being the early annals of that district of Iceland lying around the promontory called Sudefells, by Walter Scott. Edinburgh.

See also Northern Antiquities by P. H. Mallet, London, 1847; and the edition in Bohn's Library, 1890.

Lockhart says: "Any one who examines the share of the work which goes under Weber's name will see that Scott had a considerable hand in that also. The rhymed versions from the *Nibelungen Lied* came, I can have no doubt, from his pen." (*Lockhart*, II, 320.)

The Works of Jonathan Swift, containing additional letters, tracts, and poems, not hitherto published; with notes and a life of the author, by Walter Scott. 19 vols. Edinburgh.

Second edition, revised, Edinburgh, 1824.
Memoirs of Jonathan Swift, Paris, 1826.

The Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head Vaine, etc. By Samuel Rowlands. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott. His name is not given, but the Advertisement is dated at Abbotsford.]

This is an exact reproduction of the 1611 edition, except for the addition of a few pages containing the Advertisement and the notes. Another edition was printed in 1815.

Waverley.

1814–17 The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland; comprising specimens of architecture and sculpture, and other vestiges of former ages, accompanied by descriptions. Together with illustrations of remarkable incidents in Border history and tradition, and original poetry. By Walter Scott, Esq. 2 vols. 4to. London.

Another edition, in 2 vols. folio, London, 1889.
Lockhart says the introduction to this work was written in 1817, but this is a mistake, for it is in the first volume, which was published in 1814.

1815 The Lord of the Isles.

Guy Mannering.

The Field of Waterloo.

The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns, and Fairies, by Robert Kirk.

The attribution of this to Scott rests on a letter by George Ticknor, in Allibone's Dictionary (vol. II, p. 1967) in which he says: "Kirk's Secret Commonwealth, a curious tract, of about a hundred quarto pages, on Fairy Superstitions and second sight, originally published in 1691, and of which, in 1815, Mr. Scott had caused a hundred copies to be privately printed by the Ballantynes, with additions, a circumstance, I think, not noted by Lockhart." Mr. Lang thinks the book was never printed until 1815. (See his edition, London, 1893). This 1815 edition of 100 copies was made, he says, from a manuscript copy preserved in the Advocates' Library, for Longman & Co. He quotes one of Scott's references to the book, but does not intimate that Scott was the editor.

Memorie of the Somervilles; being a history of the baronial house of Somerville, by James, eleventh Lord Somerville. 2 vols. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

The additions by the editor consist of a short preface and abundant notes.

1816 Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk. Edinburgh.

These letters were anonymous, but Scott was always recognized as the author of them. They are contained in the Miscellaneous Prose Works.

The Antiquary.

Tales of my Landlord. First series:

The Black Dwarf.

Old Mortality.

1817 Harold the Dauntless.

Rob Roy.

1818 Tales of my Landlord. Second series:

The Heart of Midlothian.

Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland . . . the fifth edition, with a large appendix, containing various important historical documents, hitherto unpublished; with an introduction and notes, by the editor, R. Jamieson . . . and the history of Donald the Hammerer, from an authentic account of the family of Invernahyle (by Scott: see a note accompanying the text). 2 vols. London.

Scott's contribution is short. See also Appendix IV, which is taken "from a manuscript in the possession of the Gartmore Family, communicated by Walter Scott Esq." Scott's name had become so valuable that the publishers tried to put it on the title-page of this book, to his great indignation. (See *Constable,* III, 119–20.)

1818–24 The Encyclopædia Britannica: Supplement. [For this work Scott wrote the following essays:] Chivalry, published in 1818; The Drama, published in 1819; Romance, published in 1824. (These are given in the Miscellaneous Prose Works.)

1819 Tales of my Landlord. Third series:
The Bride of Lammermoor.
A Legend of Montrose.
The Visionary, by Somnambulus. (A political satire in three letters, republished from the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.) Edinburgh.
Description of the Regalia of Scotland. Edinburgh.

This has been reprinted many times. It was included also in Provincial Antiquities.

Ivanhoe.

1819–26 The Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland, with descriptive illustrations by Sir Walter Scott, Bart. [First published in ten parts between 1819 and 1826.] 2 vols. London, 1826. 4to.

1820 The Monastery.
The Abbot.
Memorials of the Haliburtons. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott anonymously.]

30 copies were printed in 1820, and 30 more in 1824.
Reprinted, London, 1877, for the Royal Historical Society, in Genealogical Memoirs of the Family of Sir Walter Scott, Bart., of Abbotsford, by the Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D.

Trivial Poems and Triolets. Written in obedience to Mrs. Tomkin's commands. By Patrick Carey. London. [Edited by Scott. His name is not given, but the introduction is dated at Abbotsford.]

A thin 4to, with a short introduction and a few notes. A part of the material had been used in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.

1821 Northern Memoirs, calculated for the meridian of Scotland. To which is added the contemplative and practical angler. Writ in the year 1658. By Richard Franck. A new edition, with preface and notes. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott.]
Kenilworth.
The Pirate.

1821–4 The Novelists' Library. Edited, with prefatory memoirs, by Sir Walter Scott. 10 vols. London.

Also Lives of the Novelists, 2 vols., Paris, 1825. A recent edition is that published, with an introduction by Austin Dobson, by the Oxford University Press (No. 94 in The World's Classics). When these Lives were issued among the Miscellaneous Prose Works some of the biographical prefaces were put with them, and also biographical notices, reprinted from the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, of Charles Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, John Lord Somerville, King George III, Lord Byron, and The Duke of York. I give below the names of certain books in which Scott's biographies were utilized, but the list is probably far from complete:

An Account of the death and funeral procession of Frederick Duke of York, etc. To which is subjoined Sir Walter Scott's Character of His Royal Highness. By John Sykes. Newcastle, 1827.

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, gentleman. By Laurence Sterne, A.M., with a life of the author, by Sir Walter Scott. Paris, 1832. (Baudry's Foreign Library.)

Beauties of Sterne, with some account of his writings by Sir Walter Scott. Amsterdam, 1836.

Select Works of Smollett. Memoir by Sir W. Scott. Philadelphia, 1849.

The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel De Foe. With a biographical memoir of the author, literary prefaces to the various pieces, illustrative notes, etc., including all contained in the edition attributed to the late Sir Walter Scott, with considerable additions. 20 vols., London, 1840.

The Novels and Miscellaneous Works of Daniel de Foe. With prefaces and notes, including those attributed to Sir Walter Scott. 6 vols., London, 1854–6. (Bohn's British Classics.)

The Rambler, by Samuel Johnson LL.D., with a sketch of the author's life by Sir Walter Scott. 2 vols., London, 187?

1822 Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs, from 1680 till 1701; being chiefly taken from the diary of Lord Fountainhall. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott.]

See Historical Notices of Scotish Affairs, selected from the manuscripts of Sir John Lauder of Fountainhall, bart. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1848, printed for the Bannatyne club. Here Scott's edition is referred to, and his introduction is reprinted. The book was re-edited because Scott did not use the original manuscript, but an interpolated transcript, and he had no means for accurately determining the original text.

Halidon Hill, a dramatic sketch.

Macduff's Cross (in Joanna Baillie's Poetical Miscellanies).

Military Memoirs of the Great Civil War. Being the military memoirs of John Gwynne; and an account of the Earl of Glencairn's expedition, as general of His Majesty's forces, in the highlands of Scotland, in the years 1653 and 1654, by a person who was eye and ear witness to every transaction. . . . Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott. His name is not given, but the introduction is dated at Abbotsford.]

There are some notes, and a short historical introduction.

Sketch of the Life and Character of the late Lord Kinneder. [Edited by Scott. A postscript says: "This notice was chiefly drawn up by the late Mr. Hay Donaldson."] Edinburgh.

Only a few copies were printed, for private distribution.

The Fortunes of Nigel.

1823 Peveril of the Peak.

Quentin Durward.

St. Ronan's Well.

1824 Lays of the Lindsays, being poems by the ladies of the House of Balcarras. Edinburgh. [Edited by Scott, and designed as a contribution to the Bannatyne Club, but suppressed after being printed.]

Redgauntlet.

1825 Auld Robin Gray; a ballad. By the Rt. Honourable Lady Anne Barnard, born Lady Anne Lindsay, of Balcarras. [Edited by Scott for the Bannatyne Club.]

Tales of the Crusaders:

The Betrothed.

The Talisman.

1826 Letters of Malachi Malagrowther on the Currency. (To the editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.) 3 parts. Edinburgh.

Woodstock.

1826? Shakspeare [edited by Scott and Lockhart?], volumes II, III, and IV, without title page and date. Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

Scott and Lockhart began in 1823 or 1824 to prepare an edition of Shakspere. In Jan., 1825, Constable wrote to a London bookseller: "It gives me great pleasure to tell you that the first sheet of Sir Walter Scott's Shakspeare is now in type . . . This I expect will be a first-rate property." (*Constable's Correspondence*, II, 344.) At the time of Constable's bankruptcy in 1826 there was a disagreement in regard to the ownership of the property. Scott wrote to Lockhart, May 30, 1826, "What do you about Shakspeare? Constable's creditors seem desirous to carry it on. Certainly their bankruptcy breaks the contract. For me *c'est égal:* I have nothing to do with the emoluments, and I can with very little difficulty discharge my part of the matter, which is the Prolegomena, and Life and Times." (Lang's *Lockhart*, I, 409.) In 1827 the question of carrying on the work was still undecided, and it was also mentioned in a letter in 1830. (Lang's *Lockhart* II, 13 and 59). The project was ultimately abandoned, and the fate of that part of the work which was actually in print is unknown. In the Barton Collection in the Boston Public Library is preserved what is perhaps a unique copy of three volumes of the set of ten that Scott and Lockhart undertook to prepare. But as the books are bound up without title-pages, and as the commentary contains nothing that would determine its authorship, the attribution is probable rather than certain. These volumes include twelve of the comedies. On the fly-leaf of one of them is a note written by Mr. Rodd, a London bookseller. He says: "I purchased these three volumes from a sale at Edinburgh. They were entered in the catalogue as 'Shakespeare's Works, edited by Sir Walter Scott and Lockhart, vols. ii, iii, iv, all published, *unique*'." It was not positively known that such a work had been planned until the publication of Constable's *Correspondence* in 1874. At that time Justin Winsor wrote a letter to the *Boston Advertiser* (March 21, 1874) in which he said: "The account of the Barton collection, which was printed fifteen years ago, contained the earliest public mention, I believe, of the supposition that Scott ever engaged in such a work, which this life of Constable now renders certain. These later corroborative statements give a peculiar interest to the volumes which are now in this library and which are perhaps the only ones of the edition now in existence." The introductions to the plays are each only a page or two long, and are mainly, like the notes, compilations. The book corresponds fairly well with the description given in *Constable*. (See Vol. III, pp. 183, 193, 237–8, 241, 242, 244, 246, 305, 321, 442. See also Lang's *Lockhart*, I, 308–9, 395–6, and Lang's Introduction to *Peveril of the Peak*.

1827 The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French. With a preliminary view of the French Revolution. By the author of Waverley. 9 vols. Edinburgh.

Chronicles of the Canongate. First series:
The Highland Widow.
The Two Drovers.
The Surgeon's Daughter.

Memoirs of the Marchioness de la Rochejaquelin. Translated from the French. Edinburgh. (Constable's Miscellany, Vol. V. Introduction and notes by Scott.)

The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott.

6 vols. Edinburgh, 1827, and Boston, 1829.
9 vols. Paris, 1827–34.
30 vols. London, 1834–46. (Containing many of the reviews contributed by Scott to periodicals.)
Same, first 28 vols. (Omitting the Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.) Edinburgh, 1842–6, 1851, and 1861.
7 vols. Paris, 1837–8.
8 vols. Paris, 1840?
3 vols. Edinburgh, 1841–2, 1846, and 1854.

1827–55 The Bannatyne Miscellany; containing original papers and tracts relating to the history and literature of Scotland. (Edited by Sir Walter Scott, D. Laing, and T. Thomson.) 3 vols.

1828 Tales of a Grandfather. First series. 3 vols. Edinburgh.

Religious Discourses. By a layman. London.

Two sermons written by Sir Walter for George Huntly Gordon, then a Probationer. Afterwards published by Gordon, with the author's permission, to raise money.

Chronicles of the Canongate. Second series:
The Fair Maid of Perth.

Proceedings in the Court-martial held upon John, Master of Sinclair, captain-lieutenant in Preston's regiment, for the murder of Ensign Schaw of the same regiment, and Captain Schaw, of the Royals, 17 October, 1708; with correspondence respecting that transaction. Edinburgh.

Edited by Sir Walter Scott and presented by him to the Roxburghe club. Some of the same material seems to have been used in the book named below:
Memoirs of the Insurrection in 1715, by John, Master of Sinclair. With notes by Sir Walter Scott. Edinburgh, 1858, printed for the Abbotsford Club.

1829 Papers relative to the Regalia of Scotland. Edinburgh. Edited by Sir Walter Scott and presented to the members of the Bannatyne Club by William Bell, Esq.

Memorials of George Bannatyne, 1545–1608. Edited by Sir Walter Scott for the Bannatyne Club. Edinburgh.

Scott wrote the memoir of George Bannatyne which occupies the first 25 pages of the book. This memoir is also to be found in the publications of the Hunterian Club, part 8, published in 1886.

Anne of Geierstein.

Tales of a Grandfather. Second series.

1829–32 Novels, Tales, and Romances, with introductions and notes by the author. (The "Opus Magnum.")

The same material is used in the following books:

Introductions and notes and illustrations to the novels, tales, and romances of the author of Waverley. 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1833.

Autobiography of Sir Walter Scott. Philadelphia, 1831. Anderson, in his bibliography of Scott, gives this as a supposititious work, but with the exception of the title it is genuine, for it is simply the piecing together of Scott's introductions to his novels.

1830 Tales of a Grandfather. Third series.

The Doom of Devorgoil, and Auchindrane or The Ayrshire Tragedy.

Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, addressed to J. G. Lockhart, Esq. London. (The Family Library.)

Other editions: New York, 1845; London, 1868 and 1876, (illustrated by Cruikshank); London 1884, with an introduction by Henry Morley. Included in the 30 vol. edition of the Miscellaneous Prose works, but not in the 28 vol. edition.

Poems, with prefaces by the author. 11 vols. Introductory Remarks on Popular Poetry (prefixed to Minstrelsy, Vol I) and Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad (prefixed to Minstrelsy, Vol. III).

These essays were printed in 1830 and attached to the edition of the poems then on sale. They were first regularly included in the edition of 1833.

The History of Scotland. (Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopedia.) 2 vols. London. [Not in the Miscellaneous Prose Works.]

1831 Tales of a Grandfather. Fourth series. History of France.

The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., including a Journal of his Tour to the Hebrides, by James Boswell, Esq. New edition with numerous anecdotes and notes by The Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, M.P. . . . 10 vols. London. [Scott wrote and signed the notes for the Tour to the Hebrides.]

Trial of Duncan Terig, alias Clerk, and Alexander Bane Macdonald, for the murder of Arthur Davis, Sergeant in General Guise's regiment of foot. June, A. D. 1754. Edinburgh.

"To the members of the Bannatyne Club, this copy of a trial, involving a curious point of evidence, is presented, by Walter Scott." There is an introduction of 11 pages, giving the story of the crime, and bringing together instances from literature and history of the evidence of ghosts being cited in trials. That is the "curious point of evidence" referred to. The proceedings of the court are then reprinted without annotation.

1832 Tales of my Landlord. Fourth series:
Count Robert of Paris.
Castle Dangerous.

1848 Two Bannatyne Garlands from Abbotsford.

This little book was prepared for members of the Bannatyne club by the secretary, D. Laing. It contains two ballads—of which one is ancient and one a modern imitation written by Robert Surtees—annotated by Scott.

1889 Reliquiae Trottosienses, or Catalogue of the Gabions of the late Jonathan Oldbuck. (Partially published in *Harper's Magazine* for April, 1889: Vol. lxxviii, pp. 778–788. This fragment describing the main apartments at Abbotsford is the only part of the Reliquiae Trottosienses that has been printed. There is a short introduction by Mary Monica Maxwell Scott.)

The same material was included in the following book:
Abbotsford, the personal relics and antiquarian treasures of Sir Walter Scott, described by the Hon. Mary Monica Maxwell Scott. London, 1893.

1890 The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, from the original manuscript at Abbotsford. (Edited by David Douglas.) 2 vols. Edinburgh.

Second edition, 1891. Large extracts from this Journal had previously been published in Lockhart's Life of Scott.

2. Contributions to Periodicals.

(*a*) Reviews

(Most of these essays are reprinted in the 28 and 30 volume editions of Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works. Articles not included in that collection are marked by a note indicating the evidence on which they are attributed to Scott.)

1803 Amadis de Gaul, translated by Southey and by Rose. (*Edinburgh Review,* October. Vol. III.)

Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry. (*Edinburgh,* October. Vol. III. Not in M. P. W. See Lockhart, Vol. I, p. 335.)

1804 Godwin's Life of Chaucer. (*Edinburgh,* January. Vol. III.)

Ellis's Specimens of the Early English Poets. (*Edinburgh,* April. Vol. IV.)

The Life and Works of Chatterton. (*Edinburgh,* April. Vol. IV.)

1805 Johnes's Translation of Froissart. (*Edinburgh,* January. Vol. V.)

Colonel Thornton's Sporting Tour. (*Edinburgh,* January. Vol. V.)

Fleetwood, a novel by William Godwin. (*Edinburgh,* April. Vol. VI.)

The New Practice of Cookery. (*Edinburgh,* July. Vol. VI.)

The Ossianic Poems. (*Edinburgh,* July. Vol. VI. Not in M. P. W. See Lockhart, Vol. I, p. 409.)

Todd's Edition of Spenser. (*Edinburgh,* October. Vol. VII.)

1806 Ellis's Specimens of English Romance, and Ritson's Ancient English Metrical Romances. (*Edinburgh,* January. Vol. VII.)

The Miseries of Human Life. [By Rev. James Beresford.] (*Edinburgh,* October. Vol. IX.)

Miscellaneous Poetry by the Hon. William Herbert. (*Edinburgh,* October. Vol. IX.)

1809 Reliques of Burns, collected by R. H. Cromek. (*Quarterly Review,* February. Vol. I.)
Southey's Translation of The Cid. (*Quarterly,* February. Vol. I.)
Sir John Carr's Caledonian Sketches. (*Quarterly,* February. Vol. I.)
Campbell's Gertrude of Wyoming and other poems. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. I.)
John de Lancaster, a novel by Richard Cumberland. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. I.)
The Battles of Talavera, a poem [by John Wilson Croker]. (*Quarterly,* November. Vol. II.)
1810 The Fatal Revenge or The Family of Montorio, a romance [by C. R. Maturin]. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. III.)
Collections of Ballads and Songs by R. H. Evans and John Aiken. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. III.)
1811 Southey's Curse of Kehama. (*Quarterly,* February. Vol. V.)
1815 Emma and other novels by Jane Austen. (*Quarterly,* October. Vol. XIV. Not in M. P. W. See Lockhart, Vol. IV, p. 3.)
1816 The Culloden Papers. (*Quarterly,* January. Vol. XIV.)
Childe Harold, Canto III, and other poems by Lord Byron. (*Quarterly,* October. Vol. XVI.)
1817 Tales of My Landlord. [Probably written with the help of William Erskine. See Lockhart, Vol. III, p. 81. See also the Introduction to Waverley, written in 1830.] (*Quarterly,* January. Vol. XVI.)
1818 Douglas on Military Bridges. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. XVIII. Not in M. P. W. See Lockhart, Vol. III, p. 173.)
Kirkton's History of the Church of Scotland, edited by C. K. Sharpe. (*Quarterly,* May. Vol. XVIII.)
Letters from Horace Walpole to George Montague. (*Quarterly,* April. Vol. XIX. Not in M. P. W. See Memoir of John Murray, Vol. II, p. 12.)
Childe Harold, Canto IV. (*Quarterly,* April. Vol. XIX.)

Women or Pour et Contre, a tale [by C. R. Maturin]. (*Edinburgh,* June. Vol. XXX.)

Frankenstein, a novel [by Mrs. Shelley]. (*Blackwood,* March. Vol. II.)

Remarks on General Gourgaud's Narrative. (*Blackwood,* November. Vol. IV. Not in M. P. W. See Lockhart, Vol. III, p. 238.)

1824 The Correspondence of Lady Suffolk. (*Quarterly,* January. Vol. XXX.)

1826 Pepys' Diary. (*Quarterly,* March. Vol. XXXIII.)

Boaden's Life of Kemble, and Kelly's Reminiscences. (*Quarterly,* June. Vol. XXXIV.)

The Omen [by John Galt]. (*Blackwood,* July. Vol. XX.)

1827 Mackenzie's Life and Works of John Home. (*Quarterly,* June. Vol. XXXVI.)

The Forester's Guide, by Robert Monteath. On Planting Waste Lands. (*Quarterly,* October. Vol. XXXVI.)

On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition, and particularly on the Works of Hoffman. (*Foreign Quarterly Review,* July. Vol. I.)

See also Contes Fantastiques de E. T. A. Hoffmann, traduits de l' Allemand par M. Loève-Veimars, et précédés d'une notice historique sur Hoffmann par Walter Scott. Paris, 1830. 16 vols.

1828 The Planter's Guide, by Sir Henry Steuart. On Landscape Gardening. (*Quarterly,* March. Vol. XXXVII.)

Sir Humphrey Davy's Salmonia or Days of Fly-fishing. (*Quarterly,* October. Vol. XXXVIII.)

Molière. (*Foreign Quarterly Review,* February. Vol. II.)

1829 Hajji Baba in England; and The Kuzzilbash, a tale of Khorasan. (*Quarterly,* January. Vol. XXXIX.)

Ritson's Annals of the Caledonians, Picts, and Scots, etc. (*Quarterly,* July. Vol. XLI.)

Tytler's History of Scotland. (*Quarterly,* November. Vol. XLI.)

Revolutions of Naples in 1647 and 1648. (*Foreign Quarterly Review,* August. Vol. IV. Not in M. P. W. See Journal, Vol. I, p. 145, and Vol. II, p. 278.)

1830 Southey's Life of John Bunyan. (*Quarterly,* October. Vol. XLIII.)

1831 Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials. (*Quarterly,* February. Vol. XLIV.)

(*b*) Contributions to the Edinburgh Annual Register

(The dates given are those on the volumes. In most cases the book was issued about a year and a half after the nominal date. Most of Scott's contributions are unsigned. Those which were afterwards included in the collected edition of his poems are in this list marked "Poems"; in other cases (unless the article is signed) a note is made of the reason for attributing it to Scott).

1808 Vol. I, part 2.

The Bard's Incantation. Poems.

To a Lady, with Flowers from a Roman Wall. Poems.

The Violet. Poems.

Hunting Song. Poems.

The Resolve. Poems.

View of the changes proposed and adopted in the administration of justice in Scotland. (See *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 154.)

Living Poets of Great Britain. (From internal evidence I think this article may have been written by Scott, and am sure that he dictated many of the opinions it expresses, if he is not responsible for the whole.)

1809 Vol. II, part 2.

The Vision of Don Roderick. (Reprinted from the first edition.) Poems.

Epitaph designed for a Monument to be erected in Lichfield Cathedral to the Rev. Thomas Seward. Poems.

Cursory remarks upon the French order of battle, particularly in the campaigns of Buonaparte. (See *Lockhart,* Vol. II, p. 161.)

Periodical Criticism. (From internal evidence I am sure that this was written by Scott. The style is decidedly more interesting than that of the article on the poets, in the volume for the preceding year.)

The Inferno of Altisidora. (This immediately follows the article on Periodical Criticism, and is a burlesque sketch on the same subject. It serves to introduce the following imitations, respectively, of Crabbe, Moore, and Scott himself.)

The Poacher.

"Oh say not, my love, with that mortified air."

The Vision of Triermain.

1810 Vol. III, part 2.

Account of the poems of Patrick Carey, a poet of the seventeenth century. (Afterwards prefixed to the volume of Carey's poems published in 1820. See *Lockhart,* Vol. II, pp. 245–8.)

1811 Vol. IV, part 2.

Biographical memoir of John Leyden, M.D. (In the Miscellaneous Prose Works.)

1812 Vol. V, part 2.

Extracts from a journal kept during a coasting voyage through the Scottish Islands. (Published in complete form in *Lockhart,* Vol. II.)

1813 Vol. VI.

The Dance of Death. Poems.

Romance of Dunois, from the French. Poems.

Song for the anniversary meeting of the Pitt Club of Scotland. Poems.

Song on the lifting of the banner of the House of Buccleuch, at a great football match on Carterhaugh. Poems.

1814 Vol. VII.

Historical Review of the Year. (See *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 76.)

1815 Vol. VIII.

Historical Review of the Year. (See *Lockhart,* Vol III, p. 124.)

The Search after Happiness, or the Quest of Sultaun Solimaun. (Reprinted from the *Sale-Room.* See *Lockhart,* Vol. III, pp. 89–90.)

1816. Vol. IX.

The Noble Moringer. Translated from the German. Poems. (See also the introduction to *The Betrothed.*)

1817 Vol. X.

Farewell Address, spoken by Mr. Kemble to the Edinburgh Theatre, on the 29th March, 1817. (Reprinted from the *Sale-Room.*) Poems.

1824 Vol. XVII.

To Mons. Alexandre.

(*c*) Contributions to other periodicals

Scott contributed frequently to *The Edinburgh Weekly Journal,* edited and published by James Ballantyne. Some of the articles are reprinted in the Miscellaneous Prose Works. Lockhart reprints in the Life Scott's account of the coronation of George IV., and his Reply to General Gourgaud.

Scott also contributed to *The Sale-Room,* a weekly paper edited and published by John Ballantyne from January 4 to July 12, 1817 (28 numbers). (See *Lockhart,* Vol. III, p. 89.)

To *The Keepsake,* an annual, Scott contributed in 1828 The Tapestried Chamber, My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, and The Laird's Jock, and in 1830 The House of Aspen.

In *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* Vol. I, appeared three articles entitled " Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies," for which Scott furnished a large part of the material. (Numbers for April, May, and September, 1817.) Lockhart says that Scott dictated to Thomas Pringle " a collection of anecdotes concerning Scottish gypsies, which attracted a good deal of notice." The first article refers to " Mr. Walter Scott, a gentleman to whose distinguished assistance and advice we have been on the present occasion very peculiarly indebted, and who has not only furnished us with many interesting particulars himself, but has also obligingly directed us to other sources of curious information." Scott quotes from the first of the three articles in his review of *Tales of My Landlord,* and he afterwards used the same anecdotes in the introduction to *Guy Mannering.*

3. *Books which contain letters written by Scott.*

(As there is no complete collection of Scott's letters it has been thought wise to name the various sources, so far as the letters have appeared at all in print, from which such a collection might be made. The list includes only those books or articles in which letters were published for the first time; yet it is probably far from exhaustive. Notes are given in regard to the number or kind of the letters from Scott to be found in some of the less-known books.)

Memoirs of Sir Walter Scott, by J. G. Lockhart.

Edinburgh, 7 vols. 1837–8. 10 vols. 1839. Abridged edition 1848. The edition referred to throughout this study is that published by Macmillan and Company in 5 volumes, 1900.

Familiar Letters of Sir Walter Scott [edited by D. Douglas].

2 vols. Edinburgh, 1894.

Letters and Recollections of Sir Walter Scott, by Mrs. Hughes (of Uffington), edited by Horace G. Hutchinson.

London, 1904. (First published in *The Century*, xliv: 424 and 566; July and August, 1903.)

The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart, by Andrew Lang, from Abbotsford and Milton Lockhart mss. and other original sources.

2 vols. London, 1897.
These volumes contain many letters from Scott to Lockhart.

Memoir and Correspondence of the late John Murray, with an account of the origin and progress of the House, 1768–1843, by Samuel Smiles.

2 vols. London, 1891.
This book contains many letters from Scott to Murray, who published some of Scott's works and was the proprietor of the *Quarterly Review*.

Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents. A Memorial by his son Thomas Constable.

3 vols. Edinburgh, 1873.
The third volume is wholly taken up with an account of Scott's relations with Constable, his publisher, and many letters are given. See also Vol. II, pages 347 and 474.

[The Ballantyne and Lockhart Pamphlets.]

I. Refutation of the Misstatements and Calumnies contained in Mr. Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, bart., respecting the Messrs. Ballantyne, by the trustees and son of the late Mr. James Ballantyne. (1835.)

II. The Ballantyne Humbug Handled by the author of the Life of Sir Walter Scott. (1839.)

III. Reply to Mr. Lockhart's Pamphlet, entitled "The Ballantyne-Humbug Handled," etc. (1839.)

The two last pamphlets contain numerous letters of Scott's. For a history of Scott's publishing operations these pamphlets should be studied in connection with the Memoirs of Lockhart, Murray, and Constable.

Annals of a Publishing House; William Blackwood and his sons, their magazine and friends. By Mrs. Oliphant.

3rd edition, 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1897.
About half a dozen letters not elsewhere published are given in this book.

Letters from and to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., edited by Alexander Allardyce, with a memoir by Rev. W. K. R. Bedford.

2 vols. Edinburgh, 1888.
Lockhart wrote to Sharpe in 1834: "He had preserved so many letters of yours. . . . that I must suppose the correspondence was considered by himself as one not of the common sort." (Vol. II, p. 479.) Both men were authors and antiquaries, and their letters as given in this book illustrate their favorite studies.

Lady Louisa Stuart. Selections from her manuscripts, edited by Hon. James Home.

London, 1899. (One section of the book is entitled "Unpublished Letters of Sir Walter Scott and Lady Louisa Stuart.")

Abbotsford Notanda, by Robert Carruthers. Subjoined to the Life of Sir Walter Scott by Robert Chambers, edited by W. Chambers.

London, 1871.
Letters from Scott to Hogg and Laidlaw are included.

Memorials of Coleorton, being letters from Coleridge, Wordsworth and his Sister, Southey, and Sir Walter Scott,

to Sir George and Lady Beaumont of Coleorton, Leicestershire, 1803 to 1834. Edited, with introduction and notes, by William Knight.

2 vols. Boston, 1887.
The second volume contains three letters by Scott.

The Letters of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe to Robert Chambers, 1821–45. With original memoranda of Sir Walter Scott, etc. [Edited by C. E. S. Chambers.]

Edinburgh, 1904.

Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott, by John Gibson.

Edinburgh, 1871.
Besides nine letters from Scott this book gives in full a memorial written by him in regard to the claim of Constable's trustee on *Woodstock* and *Napoleon*.

Traditions and Recollections, Domestic, Clerical, and Literary; in which are included letters of Charles II, Cromwell, Fairfax, Edgecumbe, Macaulay, Wolcot, Opie, Whitaker, Gibbon, Buller, Courtenay, Moore, Downman, Drewe, Seward, Darwin, Cowper, Hayley, Hardinge, Sir Walter Scott, and other distinguished characters. By the Rev. R. Polwhele.

2 vols. London, 1826.
Vol. II. contains five letters from Scott.

Letters of Sir Walter Scott, addressed to the Rev. R. Polwhele; D. Gilbert, Esq.; Francis Douce, Esq.; etc.

London, 1832.
Twenty-eight letters from Scott are given, of which at least one had previously been published.

A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Taylor of Norwich, . . . containing his correspondence of many years with the late Robert Southey, Esq., and original letters from Sir Walter Scott, and other eminent literary men. Compiled and edited by J. W. Robberds, F.G.S., of Norwich.

2 vols. London, 1843.
Vol. I. contains two letters from Scott, of which the second has decided critical interest. See pp. 94–100. Vol. II. has one letter from Scott. See p. 533.

Memoirs of Sir William Knighton, Bart. G. C. H. . . . including his correspondence with many distinguished personages. By Lady Knighton. Philadelphia, 1838.

Fourteen letters from Scott are given.

Letters between James Ellis, Esq., and Walter Scott, Esq.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1850.
The letters from Scott are two in number.

Haydon's Correspondence and Table-talk, with a Memoir by his son, Frederick Wordsworth Haydon.

2 vols., London, 1876.
The first volume contains a few letters by Scott.

The Life and Letters of Washington Irving, by his nephew, Pierre M. Irving.

4 vols., New York, 1865.
Vol. I, p. 240, contains a letter to Brevoort; pp. 439–40, 442–4 and 450–1 contain three letters to Irving.

Memorials of James Hogg, by M. G. Garden.

London, 1903.
Four letters by Scott are included.

Memoirs of a Literary Veteran, including sketches and anecdotes of the most distinguished literary characters from 1794 to 1849, by R. P. Gillies.

3 vols. London, 1851.
Vol. II, pp. 77–83, contains three letters from Scott; Vol. III, pp. 143–4, contains one.

Sir Walter Scott. The story of his life, by R. Shelton Mackenzie.

Boston, 1871.
See p. 471 for a letter not published elsewhere.

Byron's Letters and Journals. Rowland E. Prothero, ed.

6 vols., London, 1898–1901.
See Vol. VI, p. 55 for a letter of Scott's not published elsewhere.

Catalogue of the Exhibition held at Edinburgh in July and August, 1871, on occasion of the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott.

Edinburgh, 1872.
This catalogue contains notices of the autograph letters which were exhibited, and prints a few of the letters.

A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors. . . . By S. Austin Allibone.

3 vols. Philadelphia, 1870.
Two letters from Scott to Ticknor are given in the article on Scott.

Fragments of Voyages and Travel, by Basil Hall. Third series.

Chapter I. contains a letter written by Scott in the original manuscript of *The Antiquary,* explaining why the author particularly liked that novel.

Letters, hitherto unpublished, written by members of Sir Walter Scott's family to their old governess. Edited, with an introduction and notes, by the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford.

London, 1905.
See pp. 13–15 for a letter from Scott, and pp. 37–38 for a note of instructions in regard to his daughter Sophia's history lessons.

Correspondence between J. Fenimore Cooper and Sir Walter Scott.

The Knickerbocker Magazine, xi: 380; April, 1838.
The letter from Scott to Cooper quoted above, p. 102, is here given.

Fiction, Fair and Foul. By John Ruskin.

Nineteenth Century, viii: 195; August, 1880.
A footnote on pp. 196–7 contains fragments of five letters from Scott to the builder of Abbotsford.

Wordsworth's Poetical Works. Edited by William Knight.

11 vols. Edinburgh, 1882.
See the index. Vol. XI, p. 196 has a letter from Scott which I think had not previously been published. Vol. X, p. 105, gives one which Lockhart quotes "very imperfectly," according to Prof. Knight.

Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain . . . with biographical and historical memoirs of their lives and actions, by Edmund Lodge.

London, 1835.
Vol. I contains, in the appendix to the preface, a letter from Scott to the publisher, dated 25th March 1828. (See *Lockhart,* V, 350.)

The Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth, edited by Augustus J. C. Hare.

2 vols. Boston, 1895.
This contains a few letters of Scott's, but only one which is not published elsewhere.

A Short Account of successful exertions in behalf of the fatherless and widows after the war in 1814; containing letters from Mr. Wilberforce, Sir Walter Scott, Marshal Blücher, etc. By Rudolf Ackermann.

Oxford, 1871.
There is only one letter by Scott.

The Courser's Manual, etc., by T. Goodlake. 1828.

This book contains one letter by Scott, dated 16th October, 1828, about an old Scottish poem entitled "The Last Words of Bonny Heck." (See *Lockhart,* V. 219, for what is doubtless the same letter.)

The Chimney-sweeper's Friend and Climbing-boy's Album. Arranged by James Montgomery.

London, 1824.
The Preface contains part of a letter from Scott, in which he describes the construction of the chimneys at Abbotsford. (See *Lockhart,* IV. 158–9.)

APPENDIX II.

1. *Bibliographies of Scott*

Allibone, S. A. Dictionary of British and American Authors and Literature. 3 vols. Phil., 1870.

Anderson, J. P. Bibliography of Scott, in the Life of Scott by C. D. Yonge (Great Writers Series). London, 1888.

Lockhart's Life of Scott; the Centenary Catalogue (see above, p. 171); the British Museum Catalogue; the Dictionary of National Biography.

2. *A partial list of the books used in the preparation of this Study,* aside from those given in the bibliography of Scott's works. (See particularly the list of books which contain letters written by Scott: Appendix I. 3.)

Adolphus, J. L. Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with "Waverley," and an attempt to ascertain their author. Second edition. London, 1822.

Aitken, G. A., ed. Romances and Narratives by Daniel Defoe. 16 vols. London, 1895.

Arnold, Matthew. Byron. In Essays in Criticism. Second series. London, 1889.

Carlyle, Thomas. Sir Walter Scott. In Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. 4 vols. London, 1857.

Chambers, E. K. The Mediaeval Stage. 2 vols. Oxford, 1903.

Chesterton, G. K. Varied Types. New York, 1903.

Child, Francis J. English and Scottish Popular Ballads. 5 vols. Boston, 1882–96.

English and Scottish Popular Ballads, edited from the collection of Francis James Child by Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge. Boston, 1904.

Clemens, S. L. (Mark Twain). Life on the Mississippi. Boston, 1883.

Cockburn, Henry. Memorials of His Time. Edinburgh, 1874.

Coleridge, S. T. Specimens of the Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. 2 vols. London, 1835.

Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by E. H. Coleridge. 2 vols. Boston, 1895.

Collins, J. Churton. Ephemera Critica. London, 1901.

Courthope, W. J. A History of English Poetry. 4 vols. New York, 1895–1903.

The Liberal Movement in English Literature. London, 1885.

Cunningham, Allan. Life of Scott. Boston, 1832.

Dowden, Edward. Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley. 2 vols. London, 1886.

Fitzgerald, Percy. New History of the English Stage, from the Restoration to the liberty of the theatres, in connection with the patent houses. 2 vols. London, 1882.

Forster, John. Walter Savage Landor, a biography. 2 vols. London, 1869.

Freeman, E. A. The History of the Norman Conquest of England. 5 vols. New York, 1873.

Gates, L. E. Three Studies in Literature. New York, 1899.

Gillies, R. P. Recollections of Sir Walter Scott. (Republished in book form from *Fraser's Magazine,* Sept., Nov., Dec., 1835, and Jan., 1836.)

Hazlitt, William. Collected Works, edited by A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover. 12 vols. London, 1902–4. (Spirit of the Age, Vol. IV; Plain Speaker, Vol. VII; Dramatic Essays, Vol. VIII.)

Herford, C. H. The Age of Wordsworth. (Handbooks of English Literature.) London, 1905.

Hogg, James, ed. Jacobite Relics of Scotland, being the songs, airs, and legends of the adherents of the House of Stuart. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1819–21.

Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott. Glasgow, 1834.

Hudson, W. H. Sir Walter Scott, London, 1901.

Hunt, J. H. Leigh. Autobiography; with reminiscences of

friends and contemporaries. 2 vols. New York, 1850.

Feast of the Poets. London, 1814.

Lord Byron and some of his contemporaries. Second edition. 2 vols. London, 1828.

Hutton, R. H. Sir Walter Scott. (English Men of Letters.) New York, 1878.

Irving, Washington. Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey. (First volume of the "Crayon Miscellany.") London, 1835.

Lang, Andrew. Sir Walter Scott (Literary Lives). New York, 1906.

Border edition of the Waverley Novels, 48 vols. London, 1892–1894.

Laing, Malcolm, ed. Poems of Ossian, containing the poetical works of James MacPherson in prose and verse. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1805.

Legaré, H. S. Writings. . . . Edited by his sister. Charleston, S. C., 1846.

Lounsbury, T. R. James Fenimore Cooper. (American Men of Letters.) Boston, 1882.

Maigron, Louis. Le Roman Historique à l'Époque Romantique: essai sur l'influence de Walter Scott. Paris, 1898.

Masson, David. British Novelists and Their Styles. Cambridge, Eng., 1859.

Matthews, Brander. The Historical Novel, etc. New York, 1901.

Meteyard, Eliza. A Group of Englishmen (1795–1815), being records of the younger Wedgwoods and their friends. London, 1871.

Millar, J. H. The Mid-Eighteenth Century. (Periods of European Literature.) New York, 1902.

Moore, Thomas. Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with notices of his life. 2 vols. London, 1830.

Myers, F. W. H. Wordsworth. (English Men of Letters.) New York, 1881.

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Nichol, John. Byron. (English Men of Letters.) New York, 1880.

Palgrave, F. T. Biographical and Critical Memoir of Sir Walter Scott. (In Poetical Works of Scott. London, 1866, Macmillan and Company.)

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Percy, W. Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, consisting of old heroic ballads, songs, and other pieces of our earlier poets (chiefly of the lyric kind) together with some few of later date. 3 vols. London, 1765.

Pierce, E. L. Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner. 2 vols. Boston, 1877.

Ruskin, John. Modern Painters. New edition, 5 vols. London, 1897.

Saintsbury, George. Life of Scott. (Famous Scots Series.) New York. [1897.]

A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe. . . . 3 vols. New York, 1900–1904.

Scott, Temple, ed. The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D. (Bohn's Standard Library.) London, 1898–1905.

Southey, Robert. Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey, edited by John Wood Warter. 4 vols. London, 1856.

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Taine, H. A. Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise. 4 vols. Paris, 1863–64.

Ticknor, George. Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor. Sixth edition. 2 vols. Boston, 1877.

White, A. D. Autobiography. 3 vols. New York, 1905.

Wylie, L. J. Studies in the Evolution of English Criticism. Boston, 1894.

3. *Periodicals and articles referred to, aside from the articles written by Scott.*

The Bibliographer: Notes for a Bibliography of Swift, by Stanley Lane-Poole. Vol. VI, pp. 160–71.

The Edinburgh Review: Review of The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, Vol. I, pp. 395–406; Review of Sir Tristrem, Vol. IV, pp. 427–43; Review of Scott's edition of Swift, Vol. XXVII, pp. 1–58; Border Ballads, Vol. CCIII, pp. 306–26.

The English Historical Review: Dean Swift and The Memoirs of Captain Carleton, by Col. the Hon. Arthur Parnell, R.E. Vol. VI, pp. 97–151.

Fraser's Magazine: Review of Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, Vol. II, pp. 507–519.

The Knickerbocker Magazine: Review by J. Fenimore Cooper of Lockhart's Life of Scott, Vol. XII, pp. 349 ff.

Macmillan's Magazine: The Historical Novel: Scott and Dumas, by Prof. Saintsbury, Vol. LXX, pp. 321–330.

The Nineteenth Century: Defoe's "Apparition of Mrs. Veal," by G. A. Aitken, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 95 ff.

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